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APPROBATIONS OF CATECHISM:

DOCTRINAL, MORAL, HISTORICAL, AND LITURGICAL.

By the Right Rev. Dominick O'Brien, D.D.

We recommend to the faithful in our Diocese, "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical," published with our permission.

✠ D. O'Brien, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore.

Waterford, September, 1864.

By His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Cullen, D.D.

Having seen the approbation given to the "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical," of the Rev. Patrick Power, by his venerable ordinary, the Right Rev. Dr. O'Brien, and other prelates, I feel great pleasure in adding my approbation to theirs: and I hereby recommend the same Catechism to the faithful of this diocese, and especially to teachers in schools, and to members of the Christian Doctrine Societies, as most useful and instructive.

✠ Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin.

Dublin, 20th September, 1864.

By His Grace the Most Rev. Joseph Dixon, D.D.

We feel great pleasure in adding our name to the above Approbation, and in recommending the study of the "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical and Liturgical," to the Faithful in the Diocese of Armagh. ✠ Joseph Dixon, Archbishop of Armagh.

By His Grace the Most Rev. Patrick Leahy, D.D.

I have much pleasure in recommending to the Clergy and Laity of Cashel and Emly, the excellent "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical," published by the Rev. P. Power, with the sanction of the Right Rev. Dr. O'Brien.

✠ Patrick Leahy, Archbishop of Cashel.

By the Right Rev. Michael O'Hea, D.D.

Skibbereen.

Rev. Dear Sir,—The first volume of your "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical," I have read with much attention; and so satisfied am I with its orthodoxy, and with the very lucid explanation it gives of the important truths of our holy religion, that I have already strongly recommended it to the Faithful of this Diocese. We owe you much for such a valuable work, useful and instructive to the Clergy and Laity. You are entitled to no small merit for the persevering labour you have brought to the execution of your task, and it must be gratifying to you to find that the encouragement given to you by the learned Ordinary of your own Diocese has been sanctioned by the unqualified approbation of the distinguished Prelates, whose "Imprimatur" has been so flatteringly given to your Catechism. Wishing the publication every success,

I remain, Rev. dear Sir, your faithful servant in Christ,

The Rev. P. Power, C.C. ✠ M. O'Hea.

By the Right Rev. John MacEvilly, D.D.

Galway.

Rev. Dear Sir,—You have conferred no small benefit on the sacred cause of religion by your "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical," sanctioned by your own respected Ordinary. I trust your zealous labours may meet with the success to which you are justly entitled. I shall feel much pleasure in recommending the work to the faithful of this Diocese.

Yours faithfully in Christ, ✠ John MacEvilly.

Rev. P. Power, C.C. ——— .

By the Right Rev. D. Moriarty, D.D.

Tralee.

Rev. Dear Sir,—I am much pleased with your explanation of the Catechism. Such a work was much needed, and I am sure the Clergy will be grateful for this valuable addition you have made to their stock of Pastoral Theology.—Yours faithfully in Christ,

The Rev. P. Power, C.C. ✠ David Moriarty, Bishop of Kerry.

By the Right Rev. Edward Walsh, D.D.

We hereby earnestly recommend to the Faithful of the Diocese of Ossory, the "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical," published by the Rev. P. Power, with the permission of his Superior, the Right Rev. D. O'Brien. ✠ E. Walsh.

By the Right Rev. Thomas Furlong, D.D.

St. Peter's College, Wexford.

Rev. Dear Sir,—I have much pleasure in conveying to you my approbation of your valuable work, entitled "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical," and shall not fail to recommend it to the Clergy and Faithful of this Diocese as a most useful repertory of catechetical instruction.

I remain, Rev. Dear Sir, yours faithfully in Christ,

Rev. P. Power, C.C. ✠ T. Furlong.

By the Right Rev. J. Pius Leahy, D.D.

23, Hill-street, Newry.

Rev. Dear Sir,—Your work, which contains a full, lucid, and interesting explanation of the Catechism generally used in Ireland, will be of great service to the Catholic public at large, and especially to those among them who are engaged in the meritorious task of instructing the young and ignorant in the sublime truths of religion; and as it has received the necessary approbation of your venerated Bishop, I shall warmly recommend it wherever I may be able to exercise my influence.

I am, Rev. Dear Sir, yours truly in Christ,

Rev. P. Power, C.C. ✠ J. P. Leahy.

By the Right Rev. William Keane, D.D.

We hereby strongly recommend to the faithful of the Diocese of Ross, the Catechism published by the Rev. P. Power, and sanctioned by the Right Rev. Dr. O'Brien.

✠ William Keane, Bishop of Ross.

By the Right Rev. John Kilduff, D.D.

Longford.

Rev. Dear Sir,—I have carefully looked over your work, "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical, vol. I.," and I think it must meet with general approbation, and command a wide circulation.

Very faithfully yours in Christ,

✠ John Kilduff, Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise.

The Rev. Patrick Power, Carrick-on-Suir.

By the Right Rev. James Brown, D.D.

Newport, Salop.

Dear Rev. Sir,—I trust that your "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical and Liturgical," will meet with an extensive circulation. It appears to be well adapted for the use of upper schools, and of pupil and trained teachers, for whom some such a manual was much wanted.

With best wishes, I am, Rev. Dear Sir, yours faithfully in Christ,

✠ J. Brown, Bishop of Shrewsbury.

The Rev. P. Power, C.C.

By the Right Rev. L. Gillooly.

Sligo, Dec. 2nd, 1864.

Rev. Dear Sir,—I have read your Catechism, now complete, in three volumes; and it gives me great pleasure to unite with the many learned prelates who have already commended this most useful work, in congratulating you on the great service you have rendered by its publication to our clergy and laity. The zeal that prompted you to undertake, and still more the untiring industry with which, in the midst of your missionary duties, you pursued and completed it, deserve much praise indeed; and will, I trust, stimulate other good and gifted priests, similarly engaged in parochial labours, to persevere in the ecclesiastical studies commenced in college, and publish the result of their labours for the instruction and edification of the faithful. I hope your Catechism will be extensively read. I will not fail to recommend it to the priests, and through them to the Catholic laity of this diocese.

I remain, Rev. Dear Sir, yours faithfully in Christ,

✠ L. Gillooly.

Rev. P. Power, C.C.

By the Right Rev. Francis Kelly.

Moville, Dec. 2nd, 1864.

Rev. Dear Sir,—I shall feel much pleasure in recommending to the clergy and faithful of Derry your excellent "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical," published with the permission of your venerable Bishop.

I remain, Rev. Dear Sir, yours faithfully in Christ,

✠ Francis Kelly.

Rev. P. Power, C.C.

By the RIGHT REV. JAMES WALSHE.

Carlow, Dec. 3, 1864.

DEAR REV. SIR,—I cordially concur in the approval bestowed by so many eminent prelates upon the "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical." I shall have great pleasure in recommending your highly useful work to the faithful of this diocese.

I am, Dear Rev. Sir, yours faithfully in Christ,

Rev. P. Power, C.C. ✠ JAMES WALSHE.

By the RIGHT REV. P. DORIAN.

Belfast, Dec. 3rd, 1864.

REV. DEAR SIR,—Though I have not read the whole of the three volumes of your Catechism, I have perused enough to convince me of the great labour and research this extensive work must have cost you. This Catechism, with wonderful precision and clearness, opens a vast field of information to the reader—in fact, leaves very few questions untouched, and in the explanation of each is satisfactory. I am glad to observe that you have devoted considerable attention to questions in science of modern interest, which will well repay the attention of those who care for such important subjects. Your volumes will do a great public service.

Ever sincerely yours, ✠ P. DORIAN.

By the RIGHT REV. GEORGE BUTLER.

Park House, Limerick, Dec. 7, 1864.

MY DEAR REV. SIR,—I consider your Catechism a most valuable repertory of sound, doctrinal, and moral teaching, and I shall count it a duty, as occasion may offer, to recommend it strongly to the clergy and laity of this diocese.

Believe me, my Dear Rev. Sir, most faithfully yours in Christ,

✠ GEORGE BUTLER, Bishop of Limerick.

Rev. P. Power, C.C.

By the late RIGHT REV. T. MURPHY, D.D.

Fermoy.

REV. DEAR SIR,—I assure you I highly appreciate the first numbers of "Catechism: Doctrinal, Moral, Historical, and Liturgical," and beg most cordially to congratulate with you on the great services you are about to render to the interests of Catholic truth and enlightenment, by the execution of the task you have imposed on yourself. I shall feel it a pleasurable duty to recommend, to the fullest extent of my influence, the circulation of the work; and if you have the goodness to point out how my efforts may be most advantageously exercised, I shall be most happy to act on your suggestion.—I remain yours faithfully in Christ,

✠ T. MURPHY, Bishop of Cloyne and Ross.

The Rev. Patrick Power, Carrick-on-Suir.

CATECHISM:

DOCTRINAL, MORAL, HISTORICAL, AND LITURGICAL.

CATECHISM:

DOCTRINAL, MORAL, HISTORICAL, AND LITURGICAL;

WITH ANSWERS

TO THE

Objections drawn from the Sciences against Religion.

PRINCIPALLY TAKEN FROM THE

WORKS OF THE MOST EMINENT FRENCH CATECHISTS.

BY THE REV. PATRICK POWER.

With Episcopal Approbation.

"Take heed to thyself and to doctrine: be earnest in them. For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."—1 Tim. iv. 16.

"We have in children a precious deposit committed to our care and vigilance. Let us take all possible care of them, and be on our guard, lest the crafty enemy, who seeks only the ruin of souls, snatch them from us to make them his miserable prey."—St. John Chrysostom on 1 Tim. iv. 16.

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CATECHISM.

CHAPTER I.

ON MORTAL AND VENIAL SIN.

Q. What is sin?

A. Any wilful thought, word, deed, or omission, contrary to the law of God.

1. "Sin," as your catechism tells you, dear children, is "any wilful thought, word, deed, or omission, contrary to the law of God." We are guilty of sin whenever we *wilfully* transgress the laws of our God and our Redeemer; for the malice of sin consists in *knowingly* and *wilfully* violating "the law of God;" as there is no sin where there is no transgression of His law. If we sin by transgressing the laws of the Church or the laws of the land, by disobeying the commands of our parents and superiors, the reason is, that in being disobedient to the Church, to our superiors and parents, we disobey God; for God commands us to be respectful and obedient to them. So that we cannot transgress the laws of the Church, and the commands of our parents and superiors, without, at the same time, transgressing "the law of God," and, therefore, without being guilty of sin.

2. A sin against "the law of God" can be committed

either by "thought, word, deed, or omission." We sin by "thought," when we willingly consent to do anything contrary to the law of God, or when we deliberately take pleasure in the evil thoughts of our mind, though we have no wish or desire to do those evil things that are presented to our imagination. The latter is called *morose delectation*, which is different from the sin of desire. Both are called sins of the mind. We sin by "word," whenever we say anything "contrary to the law of God;" as, for example, swearing, cursing, speaking immodest words, or words injurious to our neighbour. These are all called the sins of the *tongue;* and so many and so deadly are the vices of the tongue, that St. James calls that member "a world of iniquity—a restless evil, full of deadly poison." (James, iii.) How many evils must flow from the tongue, when the Apostle describes it in such terms! We sin by "deed," when we commit any outward action against "the law of God;" as, for example, stealing, fighting, immodest works. These are called sins of action. We sin by "omission," when we neglect doing that which we are commanded to do by "the law of God" or the Church; as, for example, neglecting to hear Mass on Sundays and holidays—not praying to God for the graces necessary to salvation. You see, then, dear children, that we can offend God in many ways; that our heart, tongue, and the different members of our body, can be so many instruments of sin, except we control them and render them subservient to the great end—the eternal salvation of our souls—for which they were given us by God.

Q. What is mortal sin?

A. A grievous offence or transgression against the law of God.

3. Mortal sin is a "grievous," or great, "offence or

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transgression against the law of God." In order that a sin should be mortal or "grievous," two conditions are required. First, the offence should be of a serious nature in itself, or be serious on account of the importance attached to it by the legislator. For example, to strike a person severely, to steal a large sum of money, or to injure very much the character of another, is a mortal or "grievous offence against the law of God." That a sin should be mortal, it is necessary, in the second place, that the offence "against the law of God" should be committed with *perfect consent*, and with sufficient knowledge. For, as "mortal" sin renders us enemies of God, and causes the eternal damnation of our souls, it must be committed with full deliberation, and with entire and perfect liberty. For example, if an immodest thought presents itself to your mind, and that you dwell with pleasure on it, and consent to it, knowing, at the same time, that it is very sinful to do so, you are guilty of a "mortal sin," for the thought is deliberate and fully consented to. Every time, then, that your offence against the law of God is "grievous," either from the nature of the thing done, or from the will of the Lawgiver, who strictly requires the observance of what is commanded—as was the sin of our first parents, in eating the forbidden fruit—and together with this, is committed with perfect knowledge and full consent, you are guilty of mortal sin.

4. But if either of these be wanting, that is, grievousness of matter or perfect knowledge and consent, the sin is only venial. For, indeed, reason points out to us, that to commit an offence with full deliberation and perfect consent, is quite a different thing from committing the same offence on the impulse of the moment, and without bestowing a thought on the evil of what we are about doing. We shall here remark, that a matter trivial in itself can sometimes, from circumstances, be "grievous." To steal a penny is not, of itself, a very

"grievous offence;" yet if a penny be stolen from a poor man, who without it cannot obtain food which is necessary for his support, the theft is a "grievous offence against the law of God." Striking your companion slightly, through impatience, is not a "grievous offence;" but the same stroke given to your father or mother, through anger, is a grievous one, because you are wanting in the honour and respect you owe them.

Q. Why is it called mortal?

A. Because it kills the soul, by depriving it of its true light, which is sanctifying grace, and because it brings everlasting death and damnation on the soul.

5. Whatever causes death is called "mortal," which word is derived from the Latin word *mors*, death. "Mortal" sin is so called "because it kills the soul," inasmuch as it *deprives* it "of its true light" and life, "which is sanctifying grace," or the Spirit of God. God is the life and light of the soul, as the soul is the life of the body. And as the body dies as soon as the soul is separated from it, so does the soul die as soon as it is separated from God. But "mortal" sin it is that causes this separation, for it deprives the soul of "sanctifying grace," that is, the light which renders it pure and pleasing in the eyes of its Creator. It deprives the soul of the friendship of God, who, seeing it defiled and stained, and an object of horror, forsakes and abandons it. Mortal sin is, therefore, the cause of the soul being deprived of its light and life, and of becoming dead, by the wall of separation it raises up between God and it. Ah! dear children, what a frightful monster is mortal sin! No sooner have you committed it than "sanctifying grace," the very life of your soul, is lost, and your innocence, holiness, and God's friendship for you are destroyed and ruined. The very moment you commit

an impure act, blaspheme the name of God, curse your parents, or sadden them by mockery and insult, your guilty soul becomes dead, it has no longer any life, and though you may appear before the eyes of men alive, you are dead in the sight of God: "Thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead." (Apoc. iii.) You may possess, outwardly, the vigour, and health, and strength, and beauty of youth, but in reality "you are like to whitened sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness." (St. Matthew, xxiii. 27.)

6. By every mortal sin you become a murderer: but whom do you slay? Not a stranger nor an enemy, but your very self. Yes, a sinner becomes his own murderer, by killing his soul. This made St. Augustin say, that a sinner in the state of mortal sin carries a corse within himself wherever he goes, inasmuch as he carries a dead soul in a living body, buried therein as in a grave, and exposed every instant to the danger of being burned in hell. Whilst, dear children, you are in the happy state of "sanctifying grace," your soul is a favourite of heaven, an object of God's love, and a living temple and sanctuary of the Holy Ghost—it is ornamented with His heavenly gifts and blessings, enriched with virtues and merits, enlivened with faith, animated with hope, inflamed with love.

7. As iron, when it is penetrated and inflamed with fire, is like the fire itself, and glows and shines with its heat and brightness; so does the soul resemble Jesus Christ, when it is clothed with His divine gifts and graces. But no sooner does mortal sin take possession of the soul, than that soul is rendered a sink of filth and corruption, and a receptacle of Satan. She immediately losses all her former beauty and splendour, fervour and lustre. She is stripped of all her rich and valuable ornaments—she is robbed of all her spiritual treasures—she is disfigured, profaned, and polluted—she is reduced to a state of

poverty and nakedness, and brought to the lowest ebb of misery and wretchedness.

8. By "mortal sin" you are altogether changed from what you had been. From being the friend of God, you become God's enemy—from being the child of heaven, you become the slave of hell—from being the dwelling of the Holy Ghost, you become the habitation of Satan—and from being heir to the Kingdom of Heaven, you become a confederate of hell, the bound victim of the devil. "Open your eyes, miserable soul," says a holy doctor, "and see what you were and what you are—where you were and where you are." You were the spouse of the Most High, the temple of the living God, a chosen vessel of the eternal King, the throne of the true Solomon, the seat of wisdom, the companion of angels, the heir of heaven. But what a change is caused by even one mortal sin! The spouse of God is found to be an adultress with Satan—the temple of the Holy Ghost is become a den of thieves—the vessel of election is become a vessel of corruption—the dwelling of Jesus Christ is changed into a sty of unclean beasts—the seat of God into a chair of pestilence—the companion of angels has made herself the fellow of devils; and she who heretofore soared aloft, even to heaven, like a dove, is now in her descent to hell.

9. Sin is also called mortal, "because it brings everlasting death and damnation on the soul." By falling into mortal sin, dear children, we not only deprive our souls of the grace which made them pleasing in the sight of God, but we also render ourselves deserving of "everlasting death and damnation." Sin is an offence against God, and, as such, is deserving of punishment. The punishment of sin is to be estimated by the gravity of the offence; and as "mortal sin" is the greatest offence that can be committed against God, and the greatest insult and outrage that can be offered to His Divine Majesty, it merits the severest chastisement, which is the

"everlasting death" and never-ending punishment of the soul in hell. The soul, by one mortal sin, loses the fruits and merits of all the good works performed by her during life. Fastings, austerities, prayers, alms-deeds, and every other good work performed during life, are of not the slightest value to the soul in mortal sin; for when that guilty soul departs this life, all the good works performed for many years will be of no avail, for "everlasting death and damnation" will be its fate. Yes, the very moment that you became guilty of "mortal sin," heaven was closed against you, you lost your title to eternal happiness, and if you died in that state, your place would be for ever in hell—you would be condemned to the torments of the damned, cast into the pool of fire and brimstone, and in that dismal dungeon, where there is only "weeping and gnashing of teeth." You would for ever and ever suffer such pains, torments, and anguish as could never be told by mortal tongue.

10. Ah! children, what a dread you should have of "mortal sin"! If you are now in that unhappy state, bewail and mourn for your wretched fate, for the heavens mourn over you, the Church deplores you, all the saints lament for you, because you have sinned mortally, and have not done penance. Arise at once from the precipice on which you are lying—you are suspended over it only by a thread. God, whom you have outraged, holds that thread of your life. At any moment He may cut it; and if it be cut when you are in mortal sin, your fall will not be broken until hell receives you. Oh! the state of a sinful soul! How is it that we can sleep tranquilly after committing mortal sin? Why is it that we do not reflect on this great and alarming truth? The Gospel tells us, the Apostle tells us, Jesus Christ Himself tells us, that if we die in "mortal sin," we shall be damned for an eternity!

Q. Does venial sin deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, and deserve everlasting punishment?

A. No; but it hurts the soul, by lessening its love for God, and by disposing it to mortal sin. The Scripture says: "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little." (Eccl. xix. 1.)

11. "Venial sin" is a smaller transgression of the law, a more pardonable offence; for though it does not kill the soul "as mortal sin" does, nor "deserve" everlasting death and damnation, yet it "hurts the soul," because it darkens its beauty before God, displeases Him, and "lessens its love for" Him. A sin can be "venial" either because the offence in itself is slight, and attended with no pernicious results; or, because though in itself grievous, it is committed without full deliberation and perfect consent. To steal, for example, an apple, or to tell a jocose lie, is only a "venial sin," because the thing in itself is not attended with any serious consequences. But sins of blasphemy and impurity admit of no parvity of matter, and are, in all cases, if committed with full knowledge and consent, mortal. An offence *in itself* grievous, is yet only venial when committed inadvertently, that is, without sufficient knowledge and perfect consent; as, for example, to blaspheme the name of God, or to commit an impure act while your reason is disturbed and you have lost control over yourself and your faculties, or whilst you are scarcely awake from sleep. These, and other like sins are called "venial," that is pardonable, deserving of pardon, because God pardons them more easily, and does not punish them, as He does mortal sin, with "everlasting death and damnation."

12. But though venial sin does not kill the soul by banishing from it the grace of God altogether, yet "it hurts the soul," by obscuring its lustre, diminishing its

splendour, and staining its brightness. It does not render the soul positively hateful in the sight of God, but it makes her less fine, less holy, less beautiful, and consequently less agreeable in His sight. It does not destroy the friendship that exists between God and the soul, so as to make them enemies, but "it lessens the love of the soul for God." It cools the fervour of that charity with which it was inflamed, begets a degree of indifference towards Him, and weakens and cools the fervour of our love for Him. And as a little dust or smoke, though it does not blind the eyes, yet injures the sight, so venial sin darkens the spiritual sight of the soul, and lessens the fervour of love for God. In consequence of this *lessening* and cooling of our love for God, the love of God becomes *lessened* and cooled towards us. Our indifference about pleasing Him makes Him the more indifferent towards us. The more we offend Him, though but venially, the more He is displeased with us.

13. Venial sin "disposes to mortal sin," for a habit of transgressing in small things will lead to greater transgressions. If, dear children, you be accustomed to use rash words, to commit small thefts, to tell lies, to be negligent in your prayers and your other duties to God, and the like, you will soon be drawn farther, and at last will fall into mortal sin. All the greatest falls have small beginnings. No person becomes wicked on a sudden. As the carpenter's repeated blows drive in the wedge farther every time, till the block is at last split—as a little chink, when neglected, will sink the largest vessel—as a spark not put out will raise a dreadful fire, so will venial sin, multiplied and not wiped away, *dispose* and inevitably lead to mortal sin.

14. The Scripture says: "He who contemns small things shall fall by little and little." Yes, everything great takes its rise from a small beginning, in the order of grace as well as in the order of nature. As large

trees spring from small seeds, and large rivers from small springs; as incurable diseases and death originate from slight distempers, so do the greatest sins flow from trivial offences. The greatest sinners have to attribute their wretched state to the contempt of slight transgressions, which, from frequent repetition, wore away the dread of mortal sin; and its horror being thus removed, they soon became the victims of it. At first the very idea of sinning mortally was enough to make them tremble, but by making no account of venial sins they were easily led, step by step, into the commission of what they before thought of with fear and dismay. Yes, dear children, though you would now be shocked at the proposal of any of the great crimes of impurity, though for the whole world you would not allow yourselves to be drawn into the commission of one of those filthy crimes; yet, if you begin to lend a willing ear to words of double meaning, if you take pleasure in them, this will pave the way to bad thoughts; from bad thoughts will spring impure desires; and if these desires be encouraged, they will lead to impure acts, and so, step by step, you will be carried into the most frightful excesses. Remember that souls do not fall into great crimes at once. The devil never proposes enormous sins at first, for their sight affrights, as they are monsters of horror, bringing with them the guilt of hell. He finds access more easily by venial sins, which, becoming habitual, lead to mortal insensibly; for, as our Lord says: "He who is unfaithful in little, is unfaithful also in much." (Luke, xvi. 10.)

15. St. Augustin compares venial sins to small venomous insects, which, though they do not kill by one bite, as the lion, yet, by their multitude, are as effectually mortal in the end. "Many little sins," he again says, "if they are neglected, kill. The drops of water which fill rivers are small; grains of sand are also small, yet if much sand be laid on a ship, it sinks it; and if water,

entering drop by drop, be not pumped out, it will drown the vessel as surely as the greatest waves flowing over her. It matters not whether she perish all at once, by one great wave, or by degrees, from springing a leak unperceived, or by water entering by little drops through an imperceptible chink, the wreck is neither less sure nor less fearful." In like manner, venial sins, if *contemned* and multiplied, though they do not amount to the guilt of mortal sin, will certainly lead the soul to mortal, and even to the most dangerous state of mortal sin. St. Chrysostom, in his Homily on St. Matthew, says: "Sometimes small sins seem to me to require more care to be avoided, than the more grievous; for the latter, of their own nature, stir up our attention against them, whereas the others are more easily despised." How careful we should then be, dear children, to avoid venial sin! Of all evils, venial sin, next to that of mortal sin, is the greatest. All the misfortunes of life—famine, pestilence, war, conflagrations, cannot be compared to the evil of venial sin. Let us, then, for the future, take particular care against telling lies, falling into anger, stealing small things, acting in any way disrespectful to our parents, neglecting our prayers; and if we manifest a desire to avoid these, God will every day give us fresh strength and grace to put into execution our good desires; and, aided by His grace, we will every hour grow up in His love and service.

HISTORICAL TRAITS.

SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS.

During the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, Susanna, daughter of Helcias, was conspicuous for her prudence and chastity. Having one day entered her orchard to bathe in the cooling stream, two old men, who were that year judges of the people, entered the garden, and concurred together to offer her violence. They approached her,

made their criminal proposals, and pressed her to consent, telling her that if she refused they would bear witness against her of having sent away her maids that she might sin in private with a young man they had discovered with her. The virtuous Susanna sighed, and said: "I am straitened on every side: for if I do this thing, it is death to me; and if I do not, I shall not escape your hands. But it is better for me to fall guiltless into your hands, than to sin in the sight of God." With that she raised her voice, and as loud as she could cried out for help. The elders also cried out at the same time, and told all they met that they had surprised Susanna in the act of adultery; that they had found her with a young man, whom they intended to secure, but for want of help had been forced to let him go. An accusation was then lodged in form against the innocent Susanna, and she was cited to take her trial next day before the people. Being carried to the place of trial, the two elders, rising up in the midst of the people, stated the charge, and related a fictitious story of their own to prove it. But Daniel, a young boy, being moved by the Spirit of God, ordered both accusers to be examined separately. The evidence of one contradicted that of the other, and the forgery was by that means detected. Susanna was acquitted, and the two accusers were convicted of perjury and slander, and condemned to suffer the punishment to which they had just before condemned the chaste Susanna.

ST. LOUIS AND QUEEN BLANCHE.

Louis IX., King of France, was scarcely twelve years old when his father died. He was brought up under the care of his mother, Blanche of Castile, who, as Regent, governed the kingdom of France. This virtuous queen had imbued the mind of her son from his very infancy with the greatest respect for sacred things, with the liveliest sentiments of piety, and with an extraordinary love for chastity. In his tender years she often repeated to him these words, so worthy of a Christian mother: "You know, my son, how tenderly I love you. I love you with that love of which only a mother is capable; yet, great and tender though my love for you be, I would feel less at seeing you fall dead at my feet than to find that you ever committed a single mortal sin." These words made such an impression on his mind, that he often declared that he had never forgotten them, and that he scarcely passed a day without recalling them to his remembrance, in order to strengthen himself against temptation. This great sovereign, in his dying words to his eldest son, strongly recommended him to avoid sin. "My son," said he, "the principal thing which I command you to attend to is that of loving God with your whole heart, and of preferring the greatest torments to the commission of a mortal sin."

ST. ISIDORE OF SCETE.

St. Isidore, priest and a hermit of Scété, was one day discovered bathed in tears. The brother who perceived him crying asked him the cause of his tears. "I weep for my sins," said he; "for though we had offended God only once in our lives, all our tears would not be enough to bewail so great an evil."

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

The Empress Eudocia sent frequent threatening messages to St. John Chrysostom, in order to force him to comply with her unjust requests, but St. John's answer to the bearer of these messages was this: "Go, tell the Empress, that *Chrysostom fears nothing but sin.*"

MARIE THERESE.

Marie Therese, consort of Louis XIV., had a very tender conscience. Bitterly bewailing one day a fault of which she had been guilty, she was told by her attendants that she need not weep so much, for it was only a venial transgression." "No matter, said she, still crying, "God has been offended, and that is a deadly stroke to my heart."

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. In order to be guilty of sin, must we willingly transgress the law of God?
2. How do we sin by thought, word, deed, and omission?
3. What is required to constitute a mortal sin?
4. If the matter of sin be not of a serious nature, is the sin mortal?
5. Why is a grievous sin called a mortal sin?
6. Is one who commits a mortal sin a murderer of his soul?
7. Describe a soul before and after the commission of mortal sin?
8. What is the change made in the soul by mortal sin?
9. Is everlasting death and damnation another consequence of mortal sin?
10. Ought the state of mortal sin be to us a source of sorrow?
11. How can we judge a sin to be only a venial offence?
12. What are the evil effects of venial sin?
13. In what way do venial sins lead to mortal sins?
14. Does the contempt of small things lead to mortal sin?
15. What do St. Augustin and St. Chrysostom say of venial sins?

PRACTICE.

1. Never forget that the greatest evil that can befall you in this life is the commission of mortal sin.

2. Fly from sin, and avoid the occasions of it, as you would fly the bite of a venomous serpent.

3. If you have miserably fallen into the state of mortal sin, arise at once from that unhappy state, praying to Jesus Christ to look down with mercy upon you, and to rescue you from the slavery of the devil.

PRAYER.

O Jesus! I acknowledge in Thy sacred presence, that I have often sinned against Thee. I have but too often forfeited Thy friendship; but I now regret it from my heart. I thank Thee for having waited for me until now; and I protest that I will never more betray Thee, since Thou hast not yet abandoned me. Enable me to find Thee again; and I hope, with the assistance of grace, never to offend Thee more. Mary, my mother, help me.

CHAPTER II.

ON SANCTIFYING GRACE.

Q. What is sanctifying grace?

A. That grace which sanctifies the soul, and makes it pleasing to God.

1. There are two kinds of grace—one called actual grace, and the other "sanctifying" or habitual grace. "Sanctifying grace" is a communication which God makes of Himself to our souls; and it is called "grace," because it is given *gratis*, being a free gift of His mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ. It is called "sanctifying grace," because by it our sins are washed away, our spiritual stains removed, and our souls

rendered just and holy in God's sight. As long as this grace dwells within us, we are holy; and if we died in that happy state, we would be admitted into heaven, to enjoy for ever the glory and happiness of the saints. What a heavenly treasure is "sanctifying grace"! He who possesses it, though he were deprived of all the good things of this world, and forced to endure all the privations of poverty, is still richer than if he were master of all the wealth of the world, for he is heir to the kingdom of heaven. By "sanctifying grace" we become holy and just; for no sooner are we clothed with it, than everything opposed to sanctity is removed. All the mortal sins of which we have been guilty are effaced; and as a ray of light dispels the thickest darkness, so does "sanctifying grace" remove all the mists and darkness of the soul.

2. Sanctifying grace "makes the soul pleasing to God," for it beautifies the soul, and renders us agreeable and delightful in the eyes of our Creator—makes us like to Jesus Christ, by the union it effects between Him and us. As iron, which of its own nature is of a blackish, ugly colour, and very cold, and very hard, when heated in a strong fire, loses all its ugly appearance, and becomes bright and shining like the fire itself, and at the same time soft and pliable, so as easily to be formed into any shape the workman pleases; in like manner, a soul in a state of sin is ugly and hateful in the sight of God, cold and tepid in all that is good, and hard and obdurate in its evil ways; but when God communicates Himself to such a soul by "sanctifying grace," all her stains are washed away, she becomes holy and just before Him, and being warmed with His holy love, she becomes pliable to His blessed will, and obedient to His commandments. This explains what St. Paul means when he says: "As many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27), because, by the grace of justification received in baptism, the justice and sanctity of

Christ is poured forth into our souls, which make us resemble Him, as the iron heated with the fire resembles the fire itself. A soul in the state of sin is a dead soul, and displeasing in the sight of God and of His holy angels. She is incapable of performing any action conducive to her eternal salvation, and of herself tends only to run farther and farther into the corruption of sin. But when "sanctifying grace" is poured down into such a soul, she becomes beautiful in the sight of God, and can perform with ease any act meritorious of eternal life. Hence, this grace of God is called habitual grace, because it remains constantly in the soul, unless it be destroyed by mortal sin.

Q. Does sanctifying grace produce any other effects on the soul?
A. Yes; it produces many other excellent effects.

3. "Sanctifying grace," besides rendering us holy and pleasing to God, makes us the adopted children of God, the heirs of our heavenly Father, the co-heirs of Jesus Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost. "Sanctifying grace" is the true life of the soul, the most precious of all gifts, and renders us in a manner participators of the divine nature. By "sanctifying grace" we become the "adopted children of the heavenly Father." Sin, by separating us from God, who is the life of our souls, brought death upon us; and as long as we remain in sin, we are children of Satan, and we are held bound under his tyrannical sway. But "sanctifying grace" confers on us a life in some sort divine—a supernatural life. It bursts asunder the bonds which prevented us from approaching God; it chases away the impure spirit by washing us in the blood of Jesus Christ. When "sanctifying grace" adorns our soul, our heavenly Father looks down on us as His dearest children—He adopts us as His own—He casts down upon us a look of complacency and tenderness; and from that moment we can address to Him these words, which Jesus

Christ Himself has put into our mouths: "Our Father, who art in heaven." By sanctifying grace we become the adopted children, not of some great sovereign or powerful monarch, but of God Himself. What glory! What an incomprehensible gift! But also, what charity—what goodness on the part of our God! This is it which made St. John say with amazement: "Behold, what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God." (1 John iii. 1.)

4. "Sanctifying grace" renders us the "brethren and co-heirs of Jesus Christ." We have the same Father as He, for we have received the spirit of adoption, as sons, whereby we cry (Abba) Father; for all the children of the same father are brothers. We are members of the same family—we are united with our divine Saviour in the closest manner—we become one with Him—all His treasures are ours, and we have a right and title to the inheritance of heaven, as members and co-heirs of Him, whom St. Paul calls our "eldest brother." By "sanctifying grace" we become the "temples of the Holy Ghost," who dwells in a particular manner in the souls of the just. This is what the great Apostle tells us, when he says: "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? For the temple of God is holy, which you are." (1 Cor. iii. 16.) "Sanctifying grace" is the "true life of the soul," and the choicest of all gifts, for it gives a right to eternal happiness. If the soul, when leaving this world, be ornamented with sanctifying grace, it will be put in possession of the joys of the blessed; but if deprived of it, its fate will be that of the damned.

5. Of all the favours that can be conferred on us, sanctifying grace is the choicest. Nothing on earth can be compared to it. All the treasures of the world are of little value in comparison with it. "I preferred

her before kingdoms and thrones," says the wise man, "and esteemed riches as nothing in comparison with her; neither did I compare unto her any precious stone; for all gold, in comparison with her, is as a little sand; and silver, in respect of her, shall be as clay." (Wis. vii. 8.) It gives a dignity, value, and merit to all our good works, which makes them most acceptable in the sight of God, and worthy of an ample reward from Him even in this life, and of eternal glory in the world to come. For when a soul is united with Jesus Christ by His grace, the good works which that soul performs, from a pure intention of pleasing Him, are now no longer the works of corrupted, sinful man, but are the works of the friends of God—fruits produced from the branch united to the vine, which is Jesus Christ, and dignified by His merits communicated to them by grace. "The sublimity of grace," says St. Augustin "ascends not only beyond the stars, and even the heavens, but rises above the celestial spirits." Oh, what an immense treasure of spiritual riches does the grace of God bring on the soul! If we are desirous of glory, honours, and riches, we shall never find any honours or riches to be compared to it. It is a gift beyond all other gifts—surpassing everything here below. What a great value, then, ought we to place upon it! how diligent we should be to preserve and increase it, and how careful not to lose it! We should be ready to sacrifice everything, even life itself, if necessary, to preserve it; for to die deprived of grace, is the greatest of all misfortunes.

Q. Why is sanctifying grace called habitual grace?
A. Because it dwells in our souls in a permanent manner.

6. The word "habitual," means continued; for anything "habitual" must remain fixed for a certain time. Sanctifying grace is called "habitual grace," because, after having cleansed our souls from sin, it dwells and

presides in us in a fixed, permanent, and uninterrupted manner, as long as we do not forfeit it by the commission of mortal sin. So that at every moment of our lives, and under all circumstances, whether we are at work or whether we are idle, whether we are awake or whether we are asleep, this grace continually resides in us, and ceases not to embellish and adorn our souls. As an avaricious and ambitious man continues to be avaricious and ambitious, though his mind be diverted for a time, on account of sleep or some other distraction, from the passion to which he is a slave; so, too, a just man, though he fall asleep, or be occupied with temporal matters, is still in possession of sanctifying grace, though for the time he is incapable of making acts of the love of God.

7. The same may be said, too, of children. By means of baptism they have received sanctifying grace, which adheres to their soul as a *habit*, until the very moment that they become guilty of a grievous transgression of the law of God, by an abuse of their liberty and reason. No sooner have you committed one mortal sin, dear children, than you are deprived of sanctifying grace. Ah! who can tell the loss which you sustain by being deprived of grace! In losing sanctifying grace, you have lost the most precious treasure—you have lost what is more dear to you than life! In being deprived of grace, the beauty of your soul, which so endeared you to God, is departed. In being deprived of sanctifying grace, you have lost all title to heaven, that mansion of joy, peace, and happiness, and you become the slave of the devil. Oh, in what horror should you hold mortal sin, when even one sin is capable of depriving you of the greatest of all blessings, and of drawing down on your heads the greatest evils that could befall your soul!

Q. Can sanctifying grace be increased in our souls?

A. Yes; it can.

8. "Sanctifying grace" renders all those in whom it dwells pleasing to God, but it does not make all persons equally pleasing to Him; for, the more it is increased in a soul, the more pure, the more holy, the more beautiful the soul is, and the more inflamed also, and the more fervent her love to God becomes. This can be explained by the example of iron and fire, alluded to before, in which we see that the more the fire is heated about the iron, the more splendid, the more glowing, and the brighter does iron become. Thus we read in the Book of Proverbs: "The path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward, and increaseth even to perfect day." (Prov. iv. 18.) If sanctifying grace was not capable of being augmented in the soul, the justice flowing from it would necessarily be equal in all. But not one will pretend to say, that all, in sanctifying grace, are equally possessed of the same degree of justice; that one who, during a long life, faithfully served God, is as perfectly just as the person who has very recently received absolution from the many sins of an ill-spent life. Sanctifying grace is not only capable of being increased, but we are frequently exhorted "to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. iii. 18.) And hence the angel in the Revelations, cried out: "He that is just, let him be justified still." (Rev. xxii. 11). This shows how careful we ought to be not only to preserve, but also to increase this precious grace in our souls, by fervent prayer and good works, which obtain from God an increase of grace, but in particular by frequenting the holy Sacraments, which are the sacred canals through which His graces flow.

Q. Can justifying grace be diminished and lost?

A. Yes; justifying grace can be lost by the commission of mortal sin, and lessened by venial sin.

9. One mortal sin, though it were only a sin of thought, deprives us altogether of sanctifying grace.

Our first parents were deprived of sanctifying grace by eating the forbidden fruit, although they ate it but once. Lucifer and the rebellious angels lost that grace by a sinful thought of pride; David was deprived of it by a single look. This precious treasure of grace we bear, as the Apostle St. Paul says, in earthen vessels, which can easily be broken. It is then certain—it is the doctrine of our Church, that when we commit one mortal sin, we fall off from grace and holiness; for to be in the state of grace, that is, persevering, sanctifying, or habitual grace, we must be free from all mortal sin.

10. "Sanctifying grace" is not lost, but lessened by the commission of venial sin. Though venial sin, of itself, does not destroy the habit of charity, yet by it charity is weakened, the brightness of the soul is obscured, and her beauty diminished; and if, dear children, we neglect to correct our venial sins, and imagine that, because they do not destroy sanctifying grace, we need not guard ourselves against them, we are preparing ourselves for a woeful fall into mortal sin; for, as we read in the Book of Ecclesiasticus: "He that despises small things, shall fall by little and little." (Eccl. xix. 1.) Venial sin, and particularly tepidity or lukewarmness in the service of God, has the fatal effect of disposing us to mortal sin; for we are led on by little and little, until the grace of justification is at last entirely banished from the soul. As a piece of iron, when heated by the force of fire, comes forth from it glowing and shining with brightness, but when exposed to the air loses gradually that glow and brightness, until at last it loses the appearance of fire altogether, and returns to the same dark, blackish colour it had before; so, too, the soul, when its fervour and charity are cooled, becomes disposed to lose its beauty, and at last is altogether deprived of it, by mortal sin.

Q. What are we to do that we may recover sanctifying grace, when we have lost it by sin?

A. We should conceive a sincere sorrow for our sins, begin to love God as the source of all justice, and be prepared to renounce everything which may be to us an occasion of a relapse into sin.

11. If you had the misfortune of falling into mortal sin, and consequently of being deprived of sanctifying grace, the only means left you to recover it is: First, the consideration of the great loss which you have sustained, that you may be excited to conceive a lively sorrow for your sins. "When you have sinned," says St. Chrysostom, "sigh and lament, not because by your sins you have deserved punishment, for this is very little; but because you have offended the Lord, who is so good in Himself, and who loves you so tenderly. Lament and sigh, then, and continue to lament." The second is, to begin to love God as the source of all justice. As we lose grace by preferring the love of creatures to the love of God; so, to recover it, we must prefer God to creatures, and begin to love Him as the source of all justice, that is, as granting us the grace of justification through His pure mercy, as being infinitely good in rewarding those who love Him, and infinitely just in punishing those who offend Him. If we have not a sincere love for God, we can expect nothing from Him; for, "he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is charity" (1 John, iv. 8); and "he that loveth not, abideth in death." (1 John, iii. 14.)

12. There is, too, required a sincere repentance for our sins; for, "except you repent, you shall all likewise perish." (Luke, xiii. 3.) These are the dispositions required by Almighty God as necessary for preparing the soul, and making her capable of receiving the grace of justification; and when we are thus prepared, let us go to the tribunal of penance, and make a candid confession of our sins, and then, by the absolution of the minister of Jesus Christ, we shall regain the

grace of God. Not, indeed, properly speaking, as if this sacrament was another disposition to prepare us for our justification; but as the sacred channel ordained by Jesus Christ, by which the grace of justification is poured down into the soul, when disposed by the love of God and sorrow for sin.

Q. Can we of ourselves so dispose ourselves as to recover sanctifying grace?

A. No; we cannot of ourselves recover sanctifying grace without the ai of actual grace.

13. How great, dear children, is our misery! To lose grace we require no assistance; but to recover it, when we have unfortunately lost it, we require the assistance of God—that God whom we had offended, when we were deprived of it. The grace of justification is a free gift of the mercy of God, through the merits of Christ; and, therefore, no good works whatsoever, which a person in the state of mortal sin performs, can ever merit or deserve that grace of God. Before justification we are in a state of sin, and so separated from Jesus Christ; we are rotten members of His body, and therefore incapable of bearing any fruit, as He Himself tells us: for, "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself," says He, "unless it abide in the vine; so, neither can you unless you abide in Me." (John, v. 14.) But though no good works, done in the state of mortal sin, can of themselves merit or deserve the grace of justification; yet Almighty God expressly requires certain good works to be done by the sinner, as necessary dispositions for receiving that grace. These dispositions are produced in the soul of the sinner by *actual* grace, which God freely bestows on him for the sake of Christ; and when these dispositions are in the soul, the grace of justification is never refused—not as due to the sinner, but as due to Jesus Christ, and to God's own fidelity, who has promised that when the sinner is so disposed, He will receive him into His favour, and pardon his sins.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATION.

JANSENISM.

Jansenism is one of the most subtle and pernicious heresies that ever infested the Church of God. Although it takes its name from Cornelius Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, in the Low Countries, it draws its existence from a cabal of five other innovators who were linked with him to overthrow religion, whilst they professed themselves its most devoted friends. The three distinguished members of the cabal were Jansenius, the Abbe St. Cyran, and the Sieur Antony Arnaud. These dark, designing men, knowing that an open attack upon the doctrines of the Church would involve them in the same anathemas that had ever been pronounced against false teachers, constructed their plan of operations on a very different principle from that of the Reformers in the foregoing century. They declared against no one article of Catholic belief, and not one did they reject; but by misconstruction they drew erroneous conclusions from the writings of St. Augustin, and by false reasoning held them out for Catholic doctrines. They professed themselves the true disciples of that great saint, and staunch followers of his doctrine. Cornelius Jansenius, the reputed father of Jansenism, was son of a Dutch peasant; he began his studies at Utrecht, and finished them at Louvain. His talents and learning merited him a doctor's degree and a professorship in that university. With his associates in error, he agreed to take upon himself the task of compiling a complete treatise upon Divine Grace, Justification, and Free-will. The work is in one large folio volume, entitled, "Augustinus." It is held up by the party as containing the pure doctrine of St. Augustin upon those subjects. Pope Urban VIII., in a Bull, dated March the 6th, 1641, published a general condemnation of Augustinus, as fraught with many errors already anathematized by the Holy See. Of the many errors contained in the work, the sum of them are these:—1. Some of God's commandments are impossible to the faithful, though they desire and endeavour to keep them as far as they are able, nor have they the grace which is requisite to make their observance possible to them. 2. In the state of corrupt nature, man never resists interior grace. 3. To merit and demerit in the state of corrupt nature, a liberty exempt from the necessity of acting is not requisite, but sufficient is the liberty which is exempt from coercion. 4. The Semipelagians admitted the necessity of a previous interior grace for every action in particular, even for the beginning of faith; and their heresy precisely consisted in this, because they pretended that grace was of such a nature as to leave man's will free, either to resist or embrace it. 5. It is an error of the Semipelagians to say that Jesus Christ died

and shed his blood for all men, without exception. These five propositions were condemned and proscribed by the Holy See as heretical, in a Bull, dated May 31st, 1635.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What effects does sanctifying grace produce in our souls?
2. What is the state of the soul before and after the reception of sanctifying grace?
3. How do we become the adopted children of God by sanctifying grace?
4. Does sanctifying grace make us the brethren of Jesus Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost?
5. Can anything on earth be compared to sanctifying grace?
6. What do you mean by habitual grace?
7. What follows from the loss of sanctifying grace?
8. Is sanctifying grace capable of being augmented in our souls?
9. By what means is sanctifying grace lost?
10. By what means is sanctifying grace lessened?
11. By what means can we recover sanctifying grace?
12. Is repentance necessary to regain the grace of God?
13. Can we of ourselves recover sanctifying grace?

PRACTICE.

1. If it be your happy lot to have presevered the sanctifying grace conferred on you by baptism, thank God for the great privilege granted you, and earnestly beg of Him the grace of perseverance.
2. If unhappily by sin you have banished sanctifying grace from your soul, endeavour to regain it by a sincere repentance.
3. Always pray to God for perseverance in His grace and friendship.

PRAYER.

O my God! we thank Thee for having often reinstated us in Thy grace, when by sin we had lost it. We give Thee thanks for affording us time to recover it, and we now promise that with Thy Divine aid we shall never lose it any more. Thou hast promised to love those who love Thee. We love Thee, our sovereign good; and do Thou grant we may never again be deprived of Thy grace and friendship. Holy Mother, succour us; we recommend ourselves to Thy protection. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

ON ACTUAL GRACE.

Q. What do you mean by grace?

A. A supernatural gift destined by God for our sanctification, and to enable us to merit heaven.

1. Before we enter on the subject of *actual* grace, it may be well, dear children, to give, in a few words, the substance of what we have said in the preceding chapter of habitual or sanctifying grace, and of justification. Justification is a gift of God by which we are enabled to pass from the state of sin to that of grace; or, in other words, it is the application of the merits of Jesus Christ by the infusion of sanctifying grace into the soul of the man. Before the infusion of sanctifying grace into the soul, man is a wretched sinner, a child of wrath and perdition, a slave of the devil, and a criminal condemned to hell. But when sanctifying grace is communicated to the soul, sin is effaced and remitted, and man becomes just and holy, a child of God and an heir of heaven; for sanctifying grace is a supernatural, inherent quality of the soul, rendering us just and holy, and giving us a right to the kingdom of heaven. We cannot of ourselves merit sanctifying grace; but we can, with the aid of *actual* grace, dispose ourselves to receive it; and we should hope for it with confidence from the goodness of God, and through the merits of Jesus Christ. Sanctifying grace is received for the first time in baptism—it is lost by mortal sin; it is recovered by penance; it is

increased by the reception of the other sacraments, by prayer, good works, and the exercise of every Christian virtue. He who dies in sanctifying grace is saved, but he who dies deprived of it is damned.

2. The word grace means, in general, a gift, a favour, a kindness liberally granted, which is not due to us on any title; for if it were due to us, it would not be a grace, as St. Paul remarks in his Epistle to the Romans. God, dear children, bestows many gifts on us; He grants us many favours; He showers down many blessings upon us, both in the natural and supernatural order. Hence it follows, that there are two kinds of actual grace—natural grace and supernatural grace. Natural graces are those purely *natural* gifts which God bestows on us, and which regard the present life, and are commonly found in all classes of men, infidels as well as Christians, the good equally as the bad. These natural gifts are health, strength, use of reason, free will, soundness of judgment, depth of comprehension, the faculty of seeing, hearing, feeling, thinking, and other similar advantages. All these things are certainly so many favours, so many graces of God, because God owes them to no one, and He gives them to whom He pleases, and in what manner He pleases.

3. They are called *natural* graces because they directly regard the present life, and are given to man inasmuch as he is a created being, but they do not raise him above the nature or condition of man. Personal beauty, good memory, vivid imagination, sound judgment, facility of conception, depth of penetration, generosity of heart, nobility of soul, are, indeed, very great gifts and extraordinary favours, and elevate the possessor of them beyond his fellows; yet they do not raise man beyond the state of man, above the condition of human nature. But though they are purely *natural* graces, and have reference only to the present life, yet, by the help of *supernatural* grace, they can become the means of salvation. Again,

it is but too true, dear children, that from their being abused, they often become the fruitful source of many sins. So little account does God make of those natural graces, that He bestows them, without any distinction, on both His friends and enemies, and frequently gives them with a more generous hand to sinners than to the just.

4. Supernatural graces mean the favours and blessings which God grants to man, that he may be raised above his natural state, and which relate not directly to this life, but to eternal life or salvation. Grace is called a "gift," because it is given gratuitously by God, who could withhold it if He pleased, without any violation of justice, and because man has no right to demand it. It is called a "supernatural gift," because it raises us up to God, and *enables* us to see Him face to face, and possess Him for ever in heaven. It is "destined by God," because none but God can grant us graces; the angels and saints, and even Mary herself, the queen of angels and saints, cannot grant us any grace; they can only ask it and obtain it for us by their powerful intercession. God grants us this gift of grace, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer; for since the fall of the first man, none could enter heaven, be agreeable to God, or have access to Him, but through Jesus Christ.

5. Those graces which we receive in the present state of our fallen nature, are the price of the blood of Christ. God grants them to us in consideration of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ on Mount Calvary. All the graces that were given before the coming of Christ were given with a view to the merits of Him who was to come, and who was to be the source of these graces, by laying down His life for mankind. The grace given to fallen man is greater and more powerful than that given before his fall; because man, after his fall, was weak, ignorant, inclined to evil; everything was opposed to his happiness and good, and he must have perished, had not God given him more assistance than He gave to him while

innocent. Whether the graces given to the angels after their creation, or to Adam before his fall, were derived from the merits of Christ, is a question upon which the Church has not decided.

6. Grace is a supernatural gift, "destined by God for our sanctification, and to enable us to merit heaven;" because the end which God proposes to Himself, in granting us this precious gift of "grace," is the sanctification of our souls. He intends that, by co-operating with this grace, we should perform works that may secure the eternal salvation of our souls, and merit for us the eternal joys of heaven. This is the end which God has in view, in bestowing upon us His graces; and to the attainment of this end we should direct all our efforts.

Q. Are there many sorts of graces?

A. Yes; there are many graces, some called external, and others internal, given us by God for our sanctification.

7. In order to enable us to arrive at heaven, which Jesus Christ has purchased for us by His blood, God acts outwardly and inwardly on us. Hence His graces are called external and internal graces. External graces are the outward aids which God grants us to enable us to do good, and to conduct us to eternal salvation. These external graces are, for example, pious reading, salutary admonitions, Christian education, wise counsels of pastors, good examples, humiliations, death of parents and of friends, poverty, sickness, and many other things which it would be too tedious to enumerate. The internal graces granted us by God, "to enable us to merit heaven," consist, first, in the good thoughts, in the holy inspirations, by which God enlightens our minds; secondly, in the wholesome affections and pious sentiments by which our hearts are touched. The former are called graces of the understanding, and the latter graces of the will.

8. Thus, dear children, those heavenly lights by

which your souls are at once illuminated, and which clearly point out to you the gulf into which you certainly should have fallen, had you yielded to this or that particular temptation, or committed this or that particular sin; that strength of mind and resolution of will, by which you are enabled to remove yourselves from the danger of sin; that sorrow which you feel at the remembrance of the sins committed by you; that remorse of conscience which oppressed you at the sight of your many crimes; that faith infused into your souls which conducts you into a Church where Christ really dwells, and which almost forces you to prostrate yourselves before Him with sentiments of adoration and respect; that hope of heaven which animates you in the fulfilment of your duties; that ardent desire of one day enjoying the glory and felicity of the saints, and which excites you to the practice of every Christian virtue; those feelings of love which induce you to prefer God to everything here below, and to make every sacrifice sooner than forfeit His favour—all these are so many interior graces given you by God, and "destined by Him for your sanctification, and to enable you" to do good and avoid evil, and thus to "merit heaven."

9. With the assistance of grace we can perform everything commanded by God, no matter how disagreeable it be, and notwithstanding the difficulties that may lie in our way. Let us take, for instance, the great St. Augustin. Before his conversion, the practice of the virtue of chastity appeared to him a thing quite impossible. But how different were his sentiments when the grace of God touched his heart! "O my God!" he cries out, "what a change has come over my heart! I now feel it a source of the greatest delight to be deprived of those unruly pleasures, which, some time ago, I imagined I could not forego." Yes, dear children, by the aid of grace, every command of God, no matter how difficult, can be complied with.

Q. Why is grace called actual grace?
A. Because it is a particular aid which God grants us for the performance of every action conducive to salvation.

10. That grace of God by which we are enabled, at the present time, to do good and avoid evil, is called *actual* grace, because it is a particular aid granted to us every time that we have a duty to fulfil in regard to our eternal salvation. It is an operation of God by which our mind is enlightened, our will excited, and our heart inflamed to perform some good work, to surmount a temptation, to repress an evil passion, and to reform a bad habit. For example, when you hear the bell ringing for Mass, God inspires you with the desire and the will of assisting at it; He gives you courage to surmount all the obstacles that may interfere with your attending to it. When you enter the church, God inspires you with the thought of comporting yourself with respect and attention. This desire, this thought, is *actual* grace. When you attend at catechism, God aids you to observe a spirit of recollection, and to maintain that decorum and regularity by which you can derive profit from the instructions given you. This, too, is *actual* grace conferred on you. The same may be said of all the obligations of a Christian life.

Q. Is grace necessary to salvation?
A. Yes; "without Me," says Christ, "you can do nothing." (John, xv. 5.)

11. It is, dear children, an article of our holy Faith, that of ourselves, and without the grace of God, we cannot do the least thing towards our salvation, neither in thought, word, nor deed. "Without me," says Christ, "you can do nothing." (John, xv. 5.) Nothing, absolutely nothing, neither little nor much, observes St. Augustin, can be done without the grace of God. We cannot do a good action, nor produce any good fruit conducive to our salvation, without the help of God. "I

am the vine," says Jesus Christ, "you the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John, xv. 5.) He does not say without Me you can do little, because this would suppose we could do something of ourselves; but He absolutely says, "without Me you can do nothing," to show that, whether little or much, we cannot do it without His assistance. We cannot have true faith in Jesus Christ, nor believe the divine truths of eternity with divine faith, without the help of the grace of God. "By grace you are saved through faith," says the Apostle, "and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God." (Ephes. ii. 8.)

12. No man can even take the smallest step to come to Jesus Christ, unless he be assisted thereto by God. This our Lord declares in express terms: "No man can come to Me," said He, "except the Father who hath sent Me draw him" (John, vi. 44); and that not by compulsion, nor by laying the free will of man under any necessity, but by the strong and sweet motions of His heavenly grace, because no natural will nor endeavour of our own can ever lead us towards Christ. We cannot entertain a good thought, nor speak a good word, which can conduce towards our salvation; nor can we by our strength repent of our sins as we ought, unless assisted by God; "for we are not sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God." (2 Cor. iii. 5.)

13. Without the grace of God we cannot avoid evil, nor can we even resist the least temptation to evil. For this reason, our Lord Jesus has told us to say every day to His heavenly Father: "Lead us not into temptation." (Matt. xxvi. 41.) There is no crime, however enormous it may be, that we are not capable of committing, were we not supported by the grace of God. We have an example of this in the denial of St. Peter. Jesus Christ foretold him that before the cock should

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crow he would deny Him thrice. Peter, relying too much on himself, asserted that he would not be guilty of such cowardice and treachery, and that he would sooner die than deny his master. Soon after a servant makes her appearance in the hall of Pilate, and charging Peter with being a friend of Jesus, he basely denied his Master, and swore he knew Him not.

14. Without grace we can do nothing in any way conducive to salvation. We are like young children who cannot take one step without falling, unless they be supported by the hands of their mothers. In the way of heaven we should fall every instant, had we not God's grace to support us. Such is the weakness to which the transgression of Adam has reduced us. Deprived of grace we can do nothing, but aided with grace we can do all things. "I can do all things," says St. Paul, "in Him who strengthened me." (Philip. iv. 13.) So, too, can every Christian, no matter how weak, how ignorant, how prone to evil he be. By the grace of God the martyrs mounted the scaffold; weak, delicate virgins practised the greatest austerities; and Christians of every age patiently and joyfully submitted to the most excruciating tortures, and laid down their lives for Jesus Christ.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATION.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. AUGUSTIN.

The touching conversion of St. Augustin furnishes us with a remarkable instance of the way in which the grace of God prevents the sinner, and also points out to us how its virtue and efficacy is increased, and becomes stronger when it is allowed to work, and no opposition offered to its influence. For many years St. Monica, mother of St. Augustin, unceasingly prayed, and poured forth her tears to God for the conversion of her son. God at last heard the mother's prayer. Augustin left Rome, where he distinguished himself, no less by his brilliant and powerful genius, than by his licentious and dissolute manners, and repaired to Milan to attend the

sermons of St. Ambrose. He was delighted with the Saint's discourses. Their style and beauty as compositions afforded him the greatest satisfaction, but for the doctrine inculcated in them he felt little interest. In a short time, however, the truth insensibly glided with the words he heard into his mind, and grace soon triumphed over every resistance.

Filled with amazement at the view of so many generous Christians, who trampled under foot all worldly pleasures, in order to devote themselves entirely to the service of God, he grew ashamed at his own disorders, and began to grieve to find his will had been so weak and divided, and one day addressed his friend Alipius in these words: "What are we doing who thus suffer the unlearned to start up and seize heaven by force; whilst we, with all our knowledge, remain behind, cowardly and heartless, and still wallow in the mire?" Thus he spoke with an unusual and extraordinary tone of voice, and with a countenance entirely altered. Then he immediately got up, and went into the garden. Alipius was astonished, not so much at his words, as at his pathetical manner of expressing them, and he followed him step by step into the garden. They sat down at as great a distance from the house as they could, and there Augustin groaned in bitter indignation against himself, and gave vent to the tempest which agitated his soul. Alipius left him not, but remained to witness the issue of this extraordinary scene. Whilst uttering his complaints, and weeping with bitter tears, he heard, on a sudden as it were, the voice of a child from a neighbouring house, which singing, frequently repeated these words in Latin: *Tolle, Lege: Tolle, Lege.* That is, "Take up and read; take up and read." Upon this he rose up, suppressing the torrent of his tears, and returned in haste to the place where Alipius was sitting, for he had left there the book of St. Paul's epistles. He took it up, opened it, and read these words: "Not in revelling and drunkenness; not in chamberings and impurities; not in strifes and envy: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in its concupiscences." He read no further, for there was no need, for at the end of these lines all the darkness of his former hesitation was removed. He shut the book, and with a calm and serene countenance approached Alipius, and told him what had just passed in his soul. They immediately went in and told the good news to St. Monica.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Repeat what has been said of sanctifying grace in the previous chapter?

2. How many kinds of graces are there?

3. Why are some graces called natural graces?
4. What do you mean by supernatural grace?
5. From what sources do the graces of God flow to us?
6. For what does God destine grace?
7. What do you understand by external and internal graces?
8. Give some examples of internal graces?
9. Can we do everything by the aid of grace?
10. Give some examples of what you mean by actual grace?
11. What proofs can you give that we can do nothing without the grace of God?
12. Are there any other texts to show that we cannot, without grace, do the least thing towards our salvation?
13. Can we resist a temptation without the grace of God?
14. With grace can we surmount every difficulty?

PRACTICE.

1. As without grace we can do nothing, let us demand it of God by humble and persevering prayer.
2. Let us never glory in any good work we perform, but attribute all the merit to God.
3. Every morning offer to God the work which you are to go through during the day, and beg of Him to sanctify it.

PRAYER.

O God! how necessary is Thy grace for us, for without it we can do nothing! Yet, how often have we abused Thy divine graces, and slighted Thy loving calls! We now, O Lord! regret our great ingratitude, and firmly resolve never more to offend Thee. We shall always readily attend to Thy sweet and heavenly calls, and answer Thy invitation by saying, Lord, from this moment I am Thine, and Thine for ever! Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

ON CO-OPERATION WITH GRACE.

Q. Does God always grant us the graces necessary to salvation?
A. Yes; God always grants to man the graces necessary to avoid evil and to do good.

1. As it is certain that we can do nothing towards our salvation without the grace of God; so, too, it is

certain, that this grace is never refused to us, for God offers His graces to all, *because He wishes the salvation of all.* (1 Tim. ii. 4.) In many parts of the Sacred Writings, God declares that He will punish with severity all those who shall have violated His commands. He must, then, grant us every grace to enable us to do what He commands; for were He to withhold the graces necessary to avoid evil, and then punish us for the evil we do, God would act towards us in a way unbecoming His justice and goodness. Would not a master act very unjustly towards you, dear children, if he should punish you for not being able to answer him in a chapter of your catechism, when, through sickness, you could not attend to the lesson? So, too, would God act with injustice by punishing us for violating His commands, having withheld from us the necessary graces to fulfil them. But who can for a moment suppose that God would act in that manner?

2. It would certainly be the height of impiety to suppose that God would lay His commands upon us, His creatures, and oblige us to obey them under pain of eternal damnation—the most dreadful of evils—and at the same time refuse to give us those helps without which it is impossible for us to observe them. Nothing can be more contrary to every idea we have of the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God, than such a supposition. Seeing, then, that God commands all men, without exception, to do good and avoid evil, He certainly gives to all such helps of His grace as He sees necessary to enable them to do so, and by so doing to save their souls: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man shall hear My voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and sup with him, and he with Me. To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me on My throne." (Rev. iii. 20.) Christ, then, knocks at the hearts of all—there is no exception; and if any man opens, be he what he will—if he gives Christ entrance,

and co-operating with Him shall overcome, eternal glory shall be his reward.

Q. Does Almighty God give the necessary assistance of His grace to true believers who are in the state of sin, and also to those who are blinded and hardened in sin?

A. Yes; God gives the necessary graces to both classes of sinners.

3. As God expressly requires from those who are in the state of sin, that they should repent of their sins and return to His friendship, He certainly grants such sinners the necessary helps to enable them to do both; for as we have said above, it would be contrary to the justice and goodness of God to require from us, under a very severe penalty, the performance of our duties towards Him, without giving us the means to perform them. We are told in many parts of the Scripture that God loveth all He has made—that He has mercy on all, and spares all; consequently He gives to all, without exception, the helps of His grace, at least those helps that are necessary for enabling them to repent, do good, and save their souls, if they co-operate with them. Did He not give them these graces, His loving them, His having mercy on them, and sparing them, would be unavailing and to no purpose: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his evil ways and live." (Ezechiel, xxxiii. 11.) Now, if God so earnestly wills the life of a sinner, and so pressingly invites him to turn and live, He must necessarily give him grace to enable him to do so. St. Peter tells us that the Lord is patient with us, and wishes our return to Him: "The Lord dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance." (2 Peter, iii. 9.) Consequently, the Lord gives sinners the necessary graces to enable them to return to Him.

4. Even blinded and hardened sinners are not deprived of certain graces, by means of which they can

return to God, and enter into friendship with Him. A blinded sinner is one who has taken up some false and dangerous opinion, and is so positive and fixed in them, that he shuts his eyes to everything that can undeceive him. A hardened sinner is one whose passions and affections towards some bad objects are so strong, that he continues to resist all the admonitions which God sends him, whether by the interior motions of His grace, or by the exterior call from good books, exhortations, admonitions, and the like. Nothing, to be sure, can be more deplorable than this state of a hardened and blinded sinner. Yet, notwithstanding this so great an evil, God Almighty, through the riches of His mercy, does not entirely abandon such sinners, but visits them from time to time with His holy calls, both by exterior occasions, as, for example, sickness, domestic afflictions, loss of property, and various other accidents, and also by the internal motions of His Holy Spirit, with which, if they would concur, they might work out their salvation.

5. "Knowest thou not," says St. Paul, "that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance, but according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the just judgment of God." (Rom. ii. 4.) In this passage from St. Paul, we see that the goodness of God does not entirely give over moving such sinners to repentance; but their hard heart rejecting all His calls, justly increases the measure of their guilt and punishment, and on account of their repeated abuses of His mercy, He withdraws His more *powerful graces* from them, visits them but seldom, and sometimes abandons them for a while entirely. And in this sense it is that the Scripture says, that God sometimes hardens sinners, blinds them, leaves them to their own inventions, gives them up to their lusts or to a reprobate sense, and the like.

Q. Does God give to infidels such helps of His grace as may enable them to gain salvation?

A. He does.

6. St. Paul tells us that God wills all to be saved, as the great end for which He created them, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, as a necessary condition of salvation, because "without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. xi. 6.) Now, infidels or unbelievers of all kinds have not this knowledge of the truth, and as God expressly wills that they should have this knowledge and be saved, He consequently gives them such graces as are sufficient, if they co-operate with them, to bring them to it. St. Paul again tells us, that Jesus Christ "gave Himself a redemption for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6); and St. John says, that "He is the propitiation of our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the world."(1 John, xi. 2.) Consequently, all must receive in some manner or other the fruits of His redemption, with a view to their salvation, by means of His grace; and, therefore, all infidels, Jews, Turks, and heathens, receive from God, in such measure and manner as He thinks proper, such graces as are enough, if they co-operate with them, to bring them to the knowledge of truth and salvation. "God," says St. Thomas, "will not allow one who, aided by His grace, seeks Him in the simplicity of his heart, to die in infidelity." Sooner than allow him to die in unbelief, He would either send an angel to teach him the truths necessary to be known for salvation, or would use some other extraordinary means of conducting him to faith.

Q. Can we render actual grace unavailing?

A. Yes; we can render grace of no avail by not co-operating with it.

7. The grace of God does not force us, nor take away our free will; but it helps our weakness, and enables us to will and to do what we could neither will nor do without it. However strong and powerful that grace be,

we have it in our power, notwithstanding, to consent to it or resist it. When we consent, we have it in our power not to consent; and when we resist, we have it in our power to consent; for free-will, or the power of doing and not doing, is essentially a part of our nature with which we were created. The grace of Jesus Christ, indeed, fortifies and perfects this liberty, and excites us to do good, but it by no means forces us. Fatal experience but too often teaches us that the motions of grace we again and again resist. How many miserable sinners are there at the present moment plunged in crime, owing to their resistance to the grace of God! How many times, dear children, has not the grace of God touched your hearts, and reproached you for your want of respect, love, and obedience towards your parents; your frequent cursing and lying? And still you continue disrespectful and disobedient to your parents, and still curse, and quarrel, and lie! Is not this resisting and rendering useless those many graces conferred on you? As you refuse to co-operate with grace given, it will avail you nothing.

Q. What do you mean by co-operating with grace?
A. To co-operate with grace is to follow its inspiration and impulse.

8. Although grace prevents us and excites us to good, and although it is God who carries on the good work in us to its perfection by His assisting grace; yet grace alone, of itself, will not avail us, except we co-operate with this grace, that is, freely consent to its motions in our soul, and willingly perform the good work to which it inclines and assists us. God stands at the door of our heart, and knocks by His preventing grace, but we must yield to His call, and open the door of our heart to Him, if we want Him to come in and sup with us; for, as St. Augustin says, "He that made you without you," that is, without any co-operation on your part, "will not

justify you without you," that is, without your will and co-operation.

9. To co-operate with grace is to act according to its impulse, to allow ourselves to be drawn by it, to do the good to which it inclines us, to avoid the evil which it seeks to turn us aside from, and to yield unresistingly to its moving impulse. For example, dear children, you meet a poor man who asks an alms from you; God inspires you with the thought of assisting him by giving him a halfpenny or a penny. The thought of doing this charitable act is a grace; and if you in reality perform it, you *co-operate* with grace. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that St. Paul, when going to Damascus, to persecute the Christians, fell on the way, struck with blindness, and that he heard a voice, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and that when he heard this voice he abandoned his resolution, and cried out, trembling, "Lord, Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" Here we have a beautiful example of co-operation with grace.

Q. Should we fear at not co-operating with the graces of God?

A. We should, lest in punishment of our resistance to His graces, God should lessen their number and strength, and on that account we should be exposed to fall into blindness of mind and hardness of heart.

10. Nothing is more dangerous to our salvation, dear children, than to resist the graces of God, because the very least of His graces having been purchased by the blood of His Son, there is a sort of profanation in resisting them, which may be punished by a total deprivation of grace. Were a poor man to cast into a river a few pence that had been given to him to relieve his distress, would he not by that act render himself unworthy of receiving any more? But are we not guilty of greater folly when we resist the graces that are offered to us, and do we not deserve by such conduct to be refused any fresh graces? Yes; for as the good use of graces will

earn for us many more, the resistance or abuse of them will deprive us of future ones.

11. "The earth," says St. Paul, "that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth thorns and briars, is reprobate, and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burnt." (Heb. vi. 8.) These are, dear children, dreadful words—words which have made the greatest saints tremble, and which should excite in us, too, a salutary fear. For, alas! what are the fruits of sanctity produced by our souls, after having been so often watered by the graces of heaven, and visited by so many inspirations? Have we not every reason to fear, that in punishment of our infidelities, God should deprive us altogether of grace, and then our minds would be darkened, and our hearts would be hardened like stone?—certain signs of eternal damnation! Let us, then, dear children, never resist the grace of God, but be always faithful in co-operating with it.

12. We read in the Gospel, that Jesus Christ, on descending from the mount of Olives to the city of Jerusalem, where He should, in a few days, be put to death, wept over it, on getting a view of that ungrateful city, saying: "If thou also hadst known, and that in this, thy day, the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee, and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." (Luke, xix.) According to this divine prediction, Jerusalem, the capital of the ancient kings of Judea—Jerusalem, the seat of religion, the former nursery of saints and heroes, and by pre-eminence called the Holy City, fell to the ground, and was demolished in so complete a manner as not to leave one stone upon another.

For resisting the grace of God, and not profiting of the favours of Jesus Christ during His stay on earth, Jerusalem was destroyed, and its temple, the wonder of the world, was reduced to ashes. Oh, how we should dread the abuse of God's mercy and grace!

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

MARY OF EGYPT'S CO-OPERATION WITH GRACE.

The conversion of Mary of Egypt presents us with a very striking example of the wonderful effects of divine grace. At the age of twelve years she left the home of her father and mother without their consent, and went to Alexandria, to gratify, as she herself says, an unbridled lust. She continued her wicked course until the twenty-eighth year of her age. One day she perceived several persons making towards the sea, and inquiring whither they were going, she was told they were going to embark for the Holy Land, to celebrate, at Jerusalem, the feast of the Exaltation of the Glorious Cross of our Saviour. "I embarked with them," she says, "looking only for fresh opportunities to continue my debauches, which I repeated during the voyage, and after my arrival at Jerusalem." Having arrived at Jerusalem, she mixed with the crowd to get into the church where the holy cross was shown, and exposed to the veneration of the faithful; but found herself withheld from entering the place, by some secret but invisible force. This happening to her three or four times, she retired into a corner of the court, and began to consider with herself what this might proceed from; and seriously reflecting that her criminal life might be the cause, she melted into tears. Beating, therefore, her sinful breast, with sighs and groans, she perceived above her a picture of the Mother of God. Fixing her eyes upon it, and remembering that she had often heard that the Blessed Virgin was the mother of mercy, the refuge of sinners, she prostrated herself before the sacred image, and fervently prayed to this divine mother to intercede with her Son for her; promising from that moment to consecrate herself to God by a life of penance, taking her for her surety in this change of her heart. After that ardent prayer she perceived in her soul a secret consolation under her grief, and, attempting again to enter the church, she went up with ease into the very middle of it, and had the comfort to venerate the precious wood of the glorious cross which brings life to man. She then cast herself

on the ground, and having kissed the pavement, with tears she arose and went to the picture of the Mother of God, whom she made the witness and surety of her engagements and resolutions. Falling on her knees before her image, she seemed to hear this voice: "If thou goest beyond the Jordan, thou shalt there find rest and comfort." With this order she complied; and after having confessed and received holy Communion in the church of St. John the Baptist, on the banks of the Jordan, she crossed the river the following morning. She lived forty-seven years in the desert, practising the most rigorous works of penance; having no other food but the roots and herbs of the wild and dreary solitude, and deprived of all communication with her fellow-beings. At the end of that period she was one day discovered by a holy hermit, named Zozimus, to whom she gave a history of her life, and concluded with desiring him to bring with him on next Lent, on Maunday Thursday, the body and blood of our Lord. In the following year, Zozimus complied with the request of Mary; and when he arrived at the banks of the Jordan, she crossed over, walking on the surface of the river as if it had been dry land. She then received from the hands of Zozimus the blessed sacrament. On leaving, she begged of Zozimus to return the following year to the place where he first saw her. Zozimus returned home, and at the very time fixed by the saint set out in quest of her. At his arrival at the place where he had first seen her, he found her corpse stretched out on the ground, and her arms extended in the form of a cross, with this inscription on the sand: "Father, bury the body of the unfortunate Mary, who died on Good Friday, and forget her not in your prayers." Zozimus, being miraculously assisted by a lion, who, with his claws, dug a grave, buried the body of Mary. Having recommended himself to the saint's intercession, he returned to his monastery, where he recounted all he had seen and heard of this holy penitent. She died in the year 421.—*Bollandists.*

VOLTAIRE'S DYING MOMENTS.

In the death of the infidel Voltaire we have a terrible example of God's vengeance on those who abuse His graces. Voltaire had been the leader of that band of infidels which threatened, in the last century, the destruction of religion in France. It is a very remarkable circumstance, that he was seized with his last illness at the very time that he had marked out when Atheism was to overthrow religion. In writing to his friend D'Alembert, the 25th of February, 1758, he says: "In twenty years *God will be a plaything.*" On the 25th of February, 1778, just twenty years from the date of the letter, he was attacked with a vomiting of blood, which terminated in his death. The violence of the malady soon made him belie his profession of

infidelity. He sent for the Abbé Gauthier, one of those holy priests whom he had, during life, unsparingly denounced. He made an avowal of his crimes, and placed in his hands a retractation of his former opinions, in order that the scandal given by him might be removed. Death, however, arrived sooner than he expected. The terrors of conscience again smote his guilty heart. He fell into all the horrors of despair. "I am abandoned," he cried out, "by God and man." He invoked the name of the Lord which he had blasphemed. But so many impieties hurled against religion had worn out the patience of God. No priest is present at his bedside, and consolation is withheld from him under his unsupportable agony. He looks affrighted and aghast; his frame is convulsed with terror and alarm; he gnashes his teeth in despair; he even devours the most loathsome things; and that hell, which he during his life laughed at, he now sees opening under him, and ready to swallow him up into its blue and surging waves. He dies sending forth one of those terrible cries of which only a dying, despairing sinner is capable.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Have you any authority for saying that God does not refuse us the graces necessary for salvation?
2. Can you prove from reason that God withholds not from us the graces necessary to salvation?
3. Does God grant sinners the graces necessary to salvation?
4. Are blinded and hardened sinners refused grace?
5. What does St. Paul say of hardened sinners?
6. Does God grant his graces to infidels?
7. Have we the power of resisting grace, and of rendering it of no avail?
8. Can grace of itself avail us to salvation?
9. What means the expression co-operating with grace?
10. What are the evil consequences of resisting grace?
11. Should we have a great dread of resisting grace?
12. What caused the destruction of the city of Jerusalem?

PRACTICE.

1. Be always prepared to act in conformity with the lights and graces which God may offer you, and never resist His holy inspirations.

2. In all dangers and temptations earnestly beg of God to strengthen you with His grace, and always have recourse to Him under all your trials and labours.

3. Often reflect on the unhappy fate of those who resist divine grace.

PRAYER.

O dearest Lord! grant that we may never resist Thy grace nor neglect Thy holy inspirations. We know that without Thy helping hand we can do nothing, and that deprived of Thy grace we are wretched, miserable objects. We have but too often neglected Thy sweet invitations, and turned a deaf ear to thy heavenly calls. We now regret our ingratitude to Thee, and promise to follow Thee faithfully evermore. Holy Mother, assist us now and for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

ON MORTAL SIN, CONFESSION, AND CONTRITION.

Q. Is it a great misfortune to fall into mortal sin?

A. It is the greatest of all misfortunes.

1. Of all the misfortunes, dear children, that can possibly befall us, there is not one that can for a moment be compared to the evil and misfortune we bring upon ourselves by falling "into mortal sin." If all men upon earth, and all the devils in hell, should conspire together with a general permission from God to do all the mischief in their power, and to inflict upon us all the torments they could invent, they would never cause us half so much misfortune as we bring upon ourselves by falling into one "mortal sin." The woes and evils caused by wars, pestilence, and famine, are all slight when compared with the great misfortune of mortal sin. Because all the evil that can be inflicted by these, as long as

we do not consent to sin, cannot hurt the soul; but we ourselves, by falling into one mortal sin, bring upon our souls a dreadful death, both here and hereafter, which is far and away the "greatest of all misfortunes."

2. See the fatal results of mortal sin even in this life. In the time of Noah the Lord drowned the whole world in punishment of mortal sin; and swept off at once all sinners from the face of the earth, and hurried them down into hell. In after times, Sodom and Gomorrha, and the towns and country around, were involved in flames, and consumed by fire and brimstone, on account of the inhabitants falling "into mortal sin." Core, Dathan, and Abiron, were swallowed up alive in the bowels of the earth, for committing mortal sin; and fourteen thousand seven hundred of their abettors were in an instant destroyed by fire. In every age of the world, millions have been hurried away when they least expected it, by violent or sudden deaths, in punishment of their crying sins. There are some instances of flourishing cities, and of entire nations, too, which, in consequence of mortal sin, were destroyed and levelled to the ground by war and pestilence, or earthquakes, or some other instrument of the vengeance of God. There is one evil in particular resulting from mortal sin, which should affright all who happen to be in that dreadful state, and that evil result is a hardness of the heart.

3. In punishment of their obstinacy in sin, God often surrenders up sinners to a reprobate sense—to a hardness of heart—so that they have no more any fear or thought of God or His judgments, or any concern at all for their souls or for eternity. It was this great evil He inflicted upon the Jews, according to the prophet David (Psalm lxvii.): "Letting their eyes be darkened that they should not see; and bowing down their back always, adding iniquity upon their iniquity."

And this God to-day does to those sinners who slight and resist His repeated calls to turn to Him. He withdraws His lights and graces from them; He gives them up to their own wicked inclinations; He suffers them to go on in their own wretched ways; He calls upon them no more; He chastises them no more; He no more speaks to their hearts, but leaves them to work their own wills, and by increasing their sins, to increase their damnation, that, as the Holy Ghost expresses it, He may punish them in the fulness of their crimes. And, oh! if we for a moment descend in spirit into hell, and view the anguish of a damned soul—sees the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never extinguished —behold the everlasting rage and despair of the poor condemned culprit, who will for ever and ever cry out for relief, and there will be no one to afford it to him; oh! reflecting on this dismal scene, what should our feelings be with regard to the great evil of mortal sin! Oh! surely, "of all misfortunes," there is not, nor can there be, a greater misfortune than that of falling into mortal sin. If, dear children, we have fallen into that melancholy state of mortal sin, let us at once arise from it.

Q. What must we do when we fall into mortal sin?

A. We must repent sincerely, and go to confession as soon as possible.

4. As "mortal sin" is the greatest misfortune that can befall us, we should use every means within our power to rescue ourselves from that guilty state, if we have been so miserable as to have fallen into it. We should, in the first place, "repent sincerely," that is, conceive a horror of sin, on account of its filthy nature; feel sorrow and regret for committing it, and firmly resolve never again to be guilty of such ingratitude as to offend God mortally. Recollect, dear chidren, that

in every mortal sin there are these two great evils: the turning away from a God infinitely good, and the very fountain of all goodness and life; and the embracing in His stead that hellish monster, sin, on account of the passing and the deceitful pleasures found in it. In a *sincere repentance* there must be, then, two principal things opposed to the two great evils of mortal sin. These two principal qualities are, the turning away from sin with horror and hatred—with sorrow for having offended God, who is infinitely good in Himself, and infinitely good to us; and the returning to God, in order to fulfil His law, to live in His grace and friendship evermore.

5. This turning away of the soul from sin, required by a *sincere repentance*, must be effectual; that is, the soul must turn away from her sins in effect. A slight sorrow for sins will not do, nor a faint resolution not to commit sin again; but the soul must renounce her sins with her whole heart; she must detest them above all the evils of the world; she must hate them even worse than hell; she must fly and detest, as a pestilence, all persons and all things that may expose her to the danger of relapsing into them; and she must be firmly resolved never to return to them upon any consideration whatever. To "repent sincerely," we must not only leave the husks of the swine, on which we had hitherto fixed our hearts and affections, but, like the prodigal son, we must arise and return to the embraces of our Father, and acknowledge with a contrite, humble, and loving heart, that we *have sinned against heaven and Him.*

6. The next thing we should do, after having fallen into mortal sin, is "to go to confession as soon as possible." When the prodigal son felt the wretched state to which he was reduced, he not only regretted the step he had taken—that of forsaking his father's house—but he at once resolved to return to his father, and sincerely confess to him his guilt at leaving him:

"I will arise," said he, "and go to my father, and say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and thee." (Luke, xv.) In like manner should you arise from your wretched state, if you have fallen into mortal sin. Having conceived sorrow and detestation for your offences, you should at once arise and go to your father, that is, your spiritual father, the priest of God, and representative of Jesus Christ, and with compunction and sorrow confess to him all those sins which have made you the enemy of God, and the slave of Satan. If you cannot at once "go to confession," after having fallen into mortal sin, you should determine to present yourself at the tribunal of penance "as soon as possible."

Q. Why should we go to confession as soon as we fall into mortal sin?

A. That we may recover God's friendship, and be always prepared to die.

7. When "we fall into mortal sin," we at once become enemies of God, and forfeit His friendship and love. To recover God's friendship and love, the only means left us by God, after baptism, is penance, or "going to confession." We cannot "recover God's friendship" except we receive pardon of our sins. But this pardon of our sins cannot be obtained without confessing them to a priest, for our Lord gave the power of forgiving sins to the Apostles, when He said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (John, xx. 23.) Now, Jesus Christ, by giving the Apostles and their successors this power, constituted them judges of our souls in His stead—the ministers of reconciliation between God and the sinner. Such being the case, it is His will that they should exercise this power with justice and discretion; but this

justice and discretion cannot be exercised except penitents make known their faults and transgressions to those appointed by God to forgive or retain their sins.

8. For how shall the ministers of the Church know what is to be forgiven, and what retained, unless the sinner make the true state of his conscience known to them by confession? How shall they know what remedy is to be applied, unless they are first acquainted with the nature of the distemper? To "recover God's friendship," after having fallen into mortal sin, it is not enough that you be sorry for it, that you do penance for it during your life; there is something more required, and that is going to the tribunal of penance, and confessing it sincerely to the minister of Christ. You may do as much good as you please, but if you do not confess every mortal sin which you remember, you cannot "recover God's friendship."

9. Another reason for "going to confession as soon as we fall into mortal sin," is that we may "be always prepared to die." If we be surprised in our sins by death, our end will be miserable, and never-ending torments will be our portion in the life to come; but a sincere confession of our sins will remit their guilt, however great their enormity be, and reinstate us in the friendship of God; and once we are restored to God's favour, and in the enjoyment of His friendship, we shall be prepared for the stroke of death in whatever way it may come. When united to God by a true confession of our sins, death cannot take us unawares; for whether it come sooner or later, we shall be always prepared to meet it. If, then, dear children, any of us have at any time fallen away from the friendship of God by mortal sin, let us not defer our confession for even a single day, but at once arise, place ourselves before God's minister, and make a candid declaration of all the sins we have committed. If that be done, and if we avoid falling into sin again, we will "be always prepared to die."

Q. What should we do if we cannot go to confession when we fall into mortal sin?

A. We must excite ourselves to perfect contrition, with a sincere desire of going to confession as soon as we can.

10. If ever we should have the misfortune of falling into mortal sin, and could not at once "go to confession," being prevented from doing so by some one thing or other, we should endeavour in every way "to excite ourselves to perfect contrition," that is, to conceive a horror of our sins because they are offensive to God, who is so just, so good, so holy in Himself. To excite in yourself this sorrow, you should fix your thoughts on that great God whom you have offended, considering His beauty, His love, His goodness, and His other amiable qualities. God is love, and beauty, and goodness itself. His mercy, His bounty, His wisdom, His truth are such, that no heart can conceive them, nor tongue express them. Everything glorious and delightful in this world dwindle into nothing when compared with the glory and dazzling beauty of God.

11. "To excite ourselves to perfect contrition," we should, too, call to mind the sufferings He endured for us during His passion and death. Through love of us our dear Lord descended from the bright throne of His Father's glory, and became a poor outcast in this world; and during a life of thirty-three years, endured privations and torments, and closed a miserable, painful life, by an ignominious death. He died bleeding and mangled on a cross in order to save us. On this exceeding love of God for us, we should reflect often; for by so doing, sentiments of grief and sadness must arise in our minds at the thought of offending so good, kind, and generous a Redeemer. If to this sorrow, flowing from the consideration of the goodness of God, whom we have offended, we add "a sincere desire of going to confession

as soon as we can," our sins will be forgiven, and we will again become the friends of God, the heirs of heaven, and the co-heirs of Jesus Christ.

Q. How do you express an act of perfect contrition?

A. O my God! I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest my sins most sincerely, because they displease Thee, my God, who art so deserving of all my love, on account of Thy infinite goodness and most amiable perfections; and I firmly resolve, by Thy holy grace, never more to offend Thee, and to amend my life.

12. In this act of contrition we have the motives "of perfect contrition," which are the infinite goodness and loveliness of God, and the sovereign horror which He has of sin. With regard to the past, it expresses the bitter regret, the *extreme* grief, the greatest sorrow for the sins committed; and with regard to the future, a firm resolution, with the assistance of the grace of God, of not sinning any more. We say with the *assistance of the grace of God*, because without the aid of God's grace we can neither avoid sin, nor perform penance such as God requires from us. In reciting this act of contrition, dear children, bear in mind, that repeating it with your lips is not enough; the words must express the feelings of a sorrowful and broken heart. Let us then endeavour to know the meaning of these words, which are so often recited by us, but it is to be feared recited without paying much attention to them.

13. "O my God!" It is to God that you address the sorrowful sentiments of your heart, for it is God whom you have offended. You say to Him, like the prodigal son, my Father, I have sinned against you, and in your presence, but now I present myself before you to crave pardon. "I am heartily sorry for having offended

Thee." Yes; for your sorrow must spring from your heart: it should not consist merely in words, but ought to be the outpouring of an afflicted mind at the thought of insulting and offending the great Lord of all things. "And I detest my sins most sincerely:" that is, your hatred of sin must be a true real hatred, detesting sin more than you detest all the other evils of life. And why should you feel this sorrow, and have this great hatred of your sins? "Because they displease Thee, my God, who art so deserving of all my love"—because by them you have saddened the heart of your Creator, and have done what has been disagreeable and displeasing to the eyes of Him who did everything to merit your love and service. You should feel sorrow for having offended Him, "on account of His infinite goodness and most amiable perfections." The perfections of God are His goodness, holiness, wisdom, loveliness, and the like; and by sin you have outraged all these perfections—you have offered an insult to the goodness and holiness of God. On this account, then, you must be sorry for that great offence, bewail it with bitter tears, and ever entertain for it sentiments of horror and detestation.

14. "And I firmly resolve by Thy holy grace never more to offend Thee, and amend my life." This resolution is essentially necessary to obtain pardon of your sins. You must resolve firmly to avoid sin for the future, and all the occasions of sin. This resolution should not be weak or wavering, but must be strong and vigorous—one that will not yield when temptations present themselves, but one which shall engage you to suffer and endure all trials and crosses sooner than again fall into the deplorable state of sin. *By the holy grace* of God you should resolve *never more to offend Him*, and to amend your life; because, as you have already seen, you cannot do anything towards your salvation without the grace of God. Rely not, then, on your own strength,

for of yourself you are powerless against the enemies of your salvation; but place your trust in God, in *whom you can do all things*, and He will strengthen you in the performance of your holy resolution. Confidence in God and distrust of yourself, are the great means by which your resolution to *amend your life* can be rendered efficacious. If you recite every day this act of contrition, sincerely and from your heart, you will live in charity with God, and die in His friendship and love.

Q. Will perfect contrition reconcile us to God without confession?

A. Yes; and it is the only means we have to recover God's friendship when we cannot go to confession.

15. "Perfect contrition," or a sorrow for having offended God on account of His infinite goodness, as it arises from a perfect love of charity, and proceeds not from the fear of chastisements, but from the consideration of having offended a God so good, is so pleasing in His sight, that the moment we have it, it reconciles us to God, and blots out all our sins. Of this kind of contrition God says: "Charity covereth a multitude of sins" (1 Peter, iv. 8); and again, "I love them that love Me" (Prov. viii. 17); "He that loveth Me shall be loved by My Father; and I will love him." (John, xiv. 21.) We find an example of this perfect contrition in the conduct of Mary Magdalen. When she came into the presence of her Saviour, "she began to wash His feet with her tears;" and as they were tears flowing from a sorrow excited by love for her divine Master, our Lord said: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." (Luke, vii.) But it must be observed, that this perfect contrition cannot exist in the soul without a sincere desire of observing all the commandments of God, and consequently of going to

confession as soon as we can; for the command of receiving the sacrament of penance is laid upon all without exception.

16. When we cannot go to confession perfect contrition "is the only means we have to recover God's friendship." Without that all other means are of no avail. Were we to practise all the austerities of the Fathers of the desert, and spend every day and moment of our lives in prayers and tears, and give abundant alms to the poor, and perform every other work of mercy, and yet have not "perfect contrition" for mortal sin, all our good works would go for nothing, and were we to die in that state our souls would be lost. If at any time, dear children, death should come upon you suddenly—at a time when no priest is present to give you confession, you ought not distrust the mercy of God, and give up every hope of pardon, but you should place your confidence in Him, and excite yourself to "perfect contrition" for your sins, as "it is the only means" remaining to you at that time. And during life often make acts of contrition, that you may the more effectually make them at the hour of death.

Q. What is necessary for our contrition to be perfect?

A. That we should be truly sorry for our sins, because they are offensive to God, *who is so good in Himself*, with a sincere resolution not to offend God any more, to satisfy for our sins, and go to confession as soon as we can.

17. In order that our contrition should be perfect, "we must be truly sorry for our sins," because by them we have offended God, "who is so good in Himself." If a person were sorry for having offended God, not so much because God is infinitely good in Himself, as that

He has promised to reward him if he be faithful to Him, and to punish him if he be unfaithful, such sorrow is not "perfect contrition," because it includes an attention to our own interest. We will better explain this by an example. We will suppose that there are two brothers, who, by an act of wilful disobedience, have offended a good father. Both know that they have very much displeased their father, and they now are sorry for it; but from *different motives.* One son feels sorrow and regret because he has a real love for his father, and not because on account of his offence his father will not be good to him in future. The other son is, too, sorry for having offended his father, but he is sorry for offending him because, by his offence, he has been guilty of ingratitude and baseness, and because he fears to be punished by his father. The sorrow of the first son is *perfect contrition;* but the sorrow of the second is only *imperfect,* for it does not proceed from pure and disinterested love.

18. Besides sorrow for having offended God, "who is so good in Himself," there is also required "a sincere resolution not to offend God any more," in order that our contrition should be perfect. If we have not a sincere resolution of sinning no more, we cannot have contrition; because it is impossible to hate sin without having a resolution, at the same time, to avoid all sins for the future, for future sins are as diametrically opposed to God as past sins. It is rather mocking God to pretend being sorry for having offended Him, and, at the same time, not to be firmly resolved to avoid everything that could be detestable in the eyes of God. The "resolution not to offend God any more" should be *sincere,* that is, we must not only avoid sin, but should, with the utmost care, avoid all dangerous occasions of sin; for if we expose ourselves to the danger, that clearly shows we have no *sincere* resolution to avoid sin; as the word of God assures us,

that "he that loves the danger shall perish in it." If our resolutions be *sincere*, we shall take particular care to fly from those persons and places that had been to us the occasion of our falling into mortal sin. Attend to this point, dear children; for were we careful to fly from evil occasions, we would abstain from many sins, and would not so often offend God; for when a person willingly exposes himself to the occasions of sin, he generally falls.

19. Another condition of perfect contrition is "to satisfy for our sins." To render our contrition perfect, it is not enough to hate and detest sin, and to resolve not to offend God any more; but there is also required an intention of making satisfaction to the offended justice of God, by voluntary mortifications of the flesh, and other works of penance—prayers, alms-deeds, fastings, patiently bearing with reprimands, reproaches, contradictions, contempt, humiliations, injuries, persecutions. God requires this at our hands, and the Church has always called for it from penitent sinners. St. Augustin says: "We must either do penance or burn, for all sin must necessarily be punished, either by the *man penitent*, or by an avenging God. Would you that God should not punish you? then punish yourselves." Perfect contrition includes also a "desire of going to confession," as we learn from the Council of Trent. "This Synod teaches, moreover, that, although it sometimes happen that this contrition is perfect through charity, and reconciles man with God before this sacrament be actually received, the said reconciliation, nevertheless, is not to be ascribed to that contrition independently of the *desire* of the sacrament, which is included therein." (Session 14.) From these words of the Council it follows, that in order to have our contrition perfect, we must have a *desire* of going "to confession, as soon as we can."

SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

MANASSES, KING OF JUDA, AND HIS SORROW FOR SIN.

Manasses, King of Juda, son and successor of Ezechias, was only twelve years old when he mounted the throne. Not one of the race of David equalled him in wickedness. He practised every form of idolatrous worship, and surrendered himself up to all the allurements of vice and dissipation. He erected altars to Baal and to the other pagan gods, and even made his own son pass through the fire lighted up in honour of Moloch. He was, too, tyrannical, cruel, unjust, and oppressive. He filled Jerusalem with the blood of the innocent. The prophets warned him against the course he was pursuing, but he put the prophets to death. The prophet Isaias was commissioned by the Lord to go and reproach him for his cruelties and abominations, but so far from attending to the prophet's admonitions, Manasses ordered him to be put to death. For twenty-two years had God been patient with him, but at last the divine vengeance fell on him. The King of Assyria came against him, and conquered him. He was then bound in chains, and led prisoner to Jerusalem. His fall, his captivity, his distress, made him enter into himself, and now he humbles himself under the powerful and chastising hand of the Almighty. He conceives a sincere sorrow for his many crimes, and by his lively and excessive grief he obtains of God pardon of his sins, and deserves to be restored to his kingdom. And now he repairs the scandals he had given, he re-establishes the worship of the true God, he leaves not a trace of idolatry in his kingdom, and in everything consults for the happiness of his people.

MARY MAGDALEN'S SINCERE SORROW FOR SIN.

In the person of Mary Magdalen we have an illustrious example of perfect contrition. St. Luke tells us that when Jesus Christ was at table in the house of a Pharisee named Simon, a woman of bad repute entered, and cast herself at the feet of Jesus, and little minding what those who were at the table might think of the act, she began washing our Lord's feet with her tears, and wiping them with her hair. She then humbly kissed them, and anointed them with precious perfumes. The Pharisee who invited Jesus, looking on all this, said to himself: If this man be a prophet, he surely ought to know the character of the person who is at his feet; and Jesus in answer to him said: "Simon, I have somethiug to say to thee. But he said, Master, say it." Then Jesus went on to tell him how at one time there were two persons who were indebted to a certain man, one for five hundred pence, the other for fifty pence, and how, when they could not pay the money, their creditor forgave them.

Then our Lord asked Simon which of the two he thought loved the creditor most. And Simon, in answer, said he supposed it was he to whom the larger sum was remitted. Jesus said that he judged rightly. And then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon: "Dost thou see this woman?" After that he contrasted the manner in which He was treated by the sinful woman, with the manner in which the Pharisee received Him, and thus concluded: "Wherefore, I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."

DAVID'S REPENTENCE.

King David had been guilty of two enormous crimes—adultery and murder. The prophet Nathan was sent by God to make him sensible of his crying sins. The king's heart was touched when Nathan enumerated the many favours that God bestowed upon him: his conscience witnessed the justice of the prophet's reproach; he acknowledged the truth, and was not displeased to hear it. He listened in humble silence, and for the moment forgetting himself to be a king, acknowledged himself a sinner. "I have sinned," he cried out, thus giving expression to the sorrow of a contrite and afflicted heart. No sooner was he made sensible of his guilt, than he exerted all the powers of his soul to blot it out. He never ceased to shed tears of repentance, till he ceased to live.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Can there be any misfortune compared to mortal sin?
2. Give some instances of the woeful consequences of mortal sin?
3. Is hardness of heart one of the consequences of mortal sin?
4. When we are guilty of mortal sin, what should we do?
5. How are we to turn away from sin and return to God?
6. Besides turning away from sin, should we go to confession?
7. How do you prove that we are bound to go to confession?
8. Could the power of forgiving sins be exercised if we did not go to confession?
9. Is confession a good preparation for death?
10. What should be the motives of our sorrow to have perfect contrition?
11. To excite true sorrow, should we think on the sufferings of Christ?
12. Does an act of perfect contrition include the motives of our sorrow for sin?
13. Give an explanation of the act of perfect contrition?

14. What should be the nature of your resolution not to offend God any more?

15. Why does perfect contrition reconcile us to God without confession?

16. Is perfect contrition the only means of obtaining pardon of our sins when we cannot go to confession?

17. What is required to render contrition perfect?

18. Is a firm resolution not to sin any more necessary for perfect contrition?

19. What else is required to render our contrition perfect.

PRACTICE.

1. Whenever you have the misfortune to fall into mortal sin, make an act of perfect contrition immediately, that your sin may be orgiven.

2. Remember that your contrition will be of no avail, unless you firmly resolve to avoid sin, and the occasions of it.

3. Approach the tribunal of penance as soon as you possibly can, whenever you have mortally sinned.

PRAYER.

O my God! what thanks should I not for ever return Thee for having so often pardoned me when I had offended Thee by mortal sin When, by my repeated outrages against Thee, I so often deserved hell, Thou didst not condemn me, but in Thy great mercy Thou didst pardon me the very moment that I acknowledged my transgressions and expressed sorrow for my crimes! I now promise, O Lord! never more to offend Thee, and to avoid, for the future, all occasions that may lead me into sin. Holy Mother! pray for me, that I may keep this resolution. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE CAPITAL SINS.

Q. How many are the chief mortal sins, commonly called capital and deadly sins?

A. Seven—Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, and Sloth.

1. We should, dear children, carefully guard against the commission of every sin, because sin, no matter of what description it be, is offensive to God, and endangers our salvation; yet there are some sins which we should in particular fly from, and these are called "capital and deadly sins." They are commonly called "capital," because they are the head and source of many other sins; they are called "deadly," because they bring *death* to the soul that yields to them. The word "capital," derived from the Latin word *caput*—head—means a source, a principal, an origin; and the sins of which we speak are called "capital," because they are the empoisoned sources from which flow innumerable other crimes.

2. The "capital sins" are seven in number, and some interpreters of the Scriptures are of opinion, that our Lord, when speaking of the seven devils which had taken possession of a man, intended to designate the seven "capital sins." St. Gregory divides these seven "capital sins" into sins of the *mind* and sins of the *body*. Pride, Envy, Covetousness, Anger, Sloth, are sins of the mind; Lust and Gluttony are sins of the body. The former, the holy doctor remarks, are the more *grievous* and *culpable;* the latter the more *infamous*.

3. The "capital sins," though of themselves mortal, are sometimes, however, only venial. They are only venial when one or other of the conditions required to render sin mortal—gravity of matter and perfect knowledge and consent—is wanting. If the matter of any one of the "capital sins" be light; or, though great, if we do not transgress with perfect knowledge and consent, we commit only a venial sin. For example—a slight excess in drinking is only a venial sin, though gluttony, of its nature, is a mortal sin; to neglect for some minutes our duties is only a venial, though sloth, of its own nature, is a mortal sin; to consent imperfectly to thoughts of pride and vanity, and take complacency in one's self, are only venial sins, though pride, in itself, is a mortal sin.

Q. What is Pride?

A. Pride is an inordinate love of ourselves, and of our own excellency, by which we attribute to ourselves what comes from God, and consider ourselves superior to all others.

4. Pride is an irregular love of one's self, which, says St. Augustin, induces man to refer everything to himself and his own merits, instead of attaching himself and referring all to God. The great evil of pride consists, then, in attributing whatever excellencies of body and mind we possess to ourselves alone, forgetting that they are the pure gifts of God; in thinking that they were given to us on account of our deserts; and thus, instead of giving glory to God for any good qualities with which we are endowed, we usurp all the honour of them to ourselves. Pride puffs us up with self-esteem, and causes us to prefer ourselves before others, and to despise them; makes us take delight and complacency in ourselves; induces us to imagine that we have graces, talents, and perfections, which, in reality, we have not. True, we can love ourselves, and set a value on the virtues, good qualities, and talents which God has given us, provided we acknowledge that all these advantages come from God, and are so many titles which He has to our love and gratitude.

5. Pride is the first, the greatest, and most dangerous of all sins. The *first*, because the rebellion of the angels in heaven, and the disobedience of the first man, Adam, in Paradise, sprung from this monster—pride. The *greatest*, because it aims directly at God Himself, and because every other sin may be traced to it. The *most dangerous*, because, as St. Augustin says, it insidiously glides into our very virtues, like a demon clothed in light, because we carry within us its principle, and it is the last vice of which we correct ourselves; and because, when pride reigns in the heart, it is ordinarily the sign of reprobation, for pride is the distinctive character of the reprobate, as God "resisteth the proud."

6. Pride, which is *hated by God and man*, is the source of many other sins and vices, called its *daughters*. They are: 1. *Ambition*, which is an immoderate desire of preferment, honour, dignities, distinctions: this Christ reprehended several times in His disciples, particularly in the mother of St. James and St. John. 2. *Vain-glory*, which is an immoderate desire of being praised for any good which we may possess, or imagine we possess: this our Lord condemns even by His own example: "I came not to seek My own glory, but the glory of Him that sent Me." (John, viii. 18.) 3. *Ostentation*, which is an irregular desire of making known to others the advantages we enjoy, whether in riches or talents. 4. *Presumption*, which is a relying too much upon our own knowledge and abilities; attempting things above our strength. 5. *Hypocrisy*, that is, counterfeiting more piety, virtue, and worth than we really possess: this vice our Saviour often reproved in the Scribes and Pharisees. 6. *Obstinacy*, or a wilful adhering to our own opinion, contrary to the judgment of others. 7. *Disobedience*, or a stubborn refusal to obey our superiors, and persisting to act in contradiction to their orders. 8. *Conceit*, or a singularity and affectation in our opinion, dress, or behaviour. 9. *Disdain*, which is contemning others, and preferring ourselves before them; and this is a horrible species of pride, and very common among the rich and powerful, and was severely condemned by our Saviour in the person of the proud Pharisee, who despised the humble publican. These and some other vices spring from that hateful sin of pride. How careful should we then be, dear children, to guard against it, and resist it, whatever form it may assume!

Q. What is the virtue opposed to pride?

A. Humility, which points out to us our defects, and prevents us from contemning others.

7. "Humility" is a virtue which, from the knowledge that it gives man of his own weakness, his

impotency, his miseries, his defects, and his nothingness, induces him to *despise himself,* and makes him neither consider himself, nor wish to be considered by others, anything but what he really is. Humility is in an especial manner recommended to us by Jesus Christ in His Gospel: "Learn of Me," He says, "because I am meek and humble of heart." (Mat. xi. 29.) And when, one day, His disciples asked Him which of them would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He took a child, and, placing him in the midst of them, said: "Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Mat. xviii. 3.) What can more strongly prove the necessity of humility than these words of our Lord? Do they not evidently make known to us that pride is an insurmountable obstacle to salvation, and that without humility it is impossible to gain heaven? "It is by humility—that virtue opposed to pride"—says St. Ambrose, "that we can obtain eternal life. Humility is the right road to heaven, and the only road." He who shall enter any other way will fall, and cannot easily arise, because "every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," says Christ.

Q. What is Covetousness?
A. Covetousness is a disorderly or inordinate love of temporal goods, and particularly of money.

8. We are guilty of the sin of "covetousness" when we feel an immoderate desire to possess riches, or feel an immoderate sorrow on being deprived of them—when we labour unceasingly to acquire them, thinking that we shall never have sufficient, and prefer to remain in want of the necessaries of life sooner than lesson our money. The sin of "covetousness" does not consist exactly in the possession of riches, for we can be rich and virtuous at the same time; but it consists in the immoderate attachment which we have for these riches—

in the great desire we have for hoarding them up—in fixing our affections on them so much, that we cannot bear to lessen them—in making them, as it were, our idol. It is this that is meant by "covetousness" or avarice.

9. Covetousness is a great sin: "The desire of money," says St. Paul, "is the root of all evils" (1 Tim. vi. 10); and in his epistle to the Corinthians, he tells that it will exclude us from the kingdom of heaven. "Covetousness" is the source of many other sins; such as fraud, lying, perjury, hardness of heart, and even murder. A covetous man is unmerciful and hard-hearted to the poor; for this vice makes him forget the ties of nature, and leads him to quarrel, and makes him to go to law with his nearest relations, father, mother, brother, and sister. He oppresses any one when it is in his power, and is neither moved by the prayers nor the tears of the widow or the orphan. He spares nothing, sacred or profane, public or private, but has his eye upon everything. He is so closely bound up with the riches of the world, that he has no care for the riches of the world to come; and the love of money is so strong in his heart, that, like Judas, in order to gain more, he is prepared to sell his God and Redeemer.

Q. What virtue is opposed to covetousness?

A. Liberality, or a detachment from the riches of this world, and a disposition to solace the poor in their necessities.

10. The means of preserving ourselves from the sin of covetousness, is to take off our hearts from the perishable goods of this world, and to remain content with what the Lord has bestowed upon us; to think often of death, which shall one day force us from everything that we here hold dear. Another most effectual remedy against covetousness is the practice of alms-deeds—giving food to those who are hungry, drink to those who are thirsty, clothing those who are naked, and comforting, as much

as we can, all those who are in poverty and sufferings; for "He that gives to the poor lends to the Lord." (Prov. xix. 17.)

Q. What is Lust?
A. Lust is a love of impure and shameful things.

11. "Lust" is a sin which Christians should hold in the greatest horror—which they should not even know. "Let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph. v.), says St. Paul. This dreadful sin is committed as often as anything unchaste is done, either alone or in company with others. It is also committed by immodest speaking, singing, writing, painting, hearing, when these are done without necessity and with pleasure. Christians sin also by looking with pleasure, and without necessity, on dangerous objects, by consenting to unchaste thoughts, or by dwelling with pleasure on such thoughts, although consent be not given to the impure acts represented to the mind. The works of the flesh, says St. Paul, are manifest—adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, and the like: and as I told you before, so I now tell you, that they who do such things shall not possess the kingdom of God. (Gal. v. 19.) How criminal, then, the sin of impurity is in the sight of God, whether in the heart only, or in words, looks, or actions, may be seen from the above words of the Apostle. He forbids all kinds of sensuality and uncleanness of mind and body, and marks them with the infamous character of being *the sins of the Gentiles who knew not God*, and were given over to a reprobate sense.

12. The ordinary effects of impurity are, blindness of the understanding, hardness of heart, ruin of health and fortune, domestic disorder, dissipation, inconstancy, forgetfulness of God and salvation, dread of the life to come, brutal abuse of reason, injustice, cruelty, and too often, final impenitence.

Q. What is the virtue opposed to lust?
A. The virtue contrary to lust is chastity.

13. "Chastity" is so pleasing to God, that it draws down upon us His choicest graces and blessings. It renders our souls the spouses of Jesus Christ, and makes us like angels on earth, and on that account is called the angelic virtue. In order to obtain and preserve it, we must be humble, because humility is the mother and guardian of chastity; we must love prayer, retirement, and be always engaged at some occupation, lead a penitent and mortified life, suppress all vain curiosity, watch, resist temptations, confess often, and reflect upon death, eternity, judgment, heaven, hell, and in particular on the passion of Christ.

Q. What is Anger?
A. Anger is an inordinate emotion of the soul, which urges us to reject with violence whatever is injurious or displeasing to us.

14. Anger is called an "inordinate" or irregular "emotion of the soul," in order that it may not be confounded with that just emotion of the mind which is regulated by reason, and which tends only to secure good or to prevent evil. When anger is not an irregular passion, but only a just displeasure at some evil action, it is a laudable zeal. Such was the anger of Jesus Christ, when having made a whip of some cords, He drove the beggars and sellers out of the temple. Such, too, is the anger of a preacher when he hurls forth denunciations against prevailing abuses. It is of this just anger that the Prophet David speaks, when he says: "Be angry, and sin not."

15. "Anger," one of the capital sins, is quite different from the anger mentioned by the Prophet, for it is an impetuous and irregular motion of the soul, which hurries us into many other grievous sins and enormities. It troubles the mind, and so violently excites it, that its frightful workings are impressed on the countenance—the eyes becoming inflamed, the voice broken, and the

body tremulous. Anger prevents one knowing what he is doing or saying. A man in anger has no respect for himself or others; his mouth sends forth the blackest calumnies, the most atrocious slanders, the most horrible imprecations and blasphemies. Quarrels, strifes, brawls, malice, revenge, and sometimes bloodshed and murder, are the consequences of anger. This is the anger, dear children, that our religion condemns, and against which St. Paul exhorts all Christians: "Let all bitterness, and anger, and clamour be removed from you, with all malice." (Eph. iv. 3.) Carefully guard against a sin whose consequences are so frightful; and no matter what provocation may be given, and what insults may be offered you, never act from passion, but always reflect before you give an answer to the person who insults or provokes you.

Q. What is the virtue opposed to anger?
A. Meekness, by which we support with patience everything done against us.

16. "Meekness," opposed to anger, induces us to bear patiently the accidents and crosses of life, to endure contradictions with calmness and dignity, to bear with affronts, and meet the obstacles which are opposed to us, by wise, mild, and persuasive means, dictated by reason and religion.

Q. What is Gluttony?
A. Gluttony is an inordinate love of eating and drinking.

17. "Gluttony" is said to be "an inordinate love of eating and drinking," because the love of eating and drinking in itself is not a sin, but rather is just and reasonable, when such love is confined to things necessary, and required for the preservation of health. What God prevents is eating and drinking to excess, without necessity, and for the sole pleasure of eating; drinking and eating with excessive greediness and desire; placing our happiness, as it were, in it; eating and drinking to

the injury of our health ; partaking of forbidden food, or breaking the fasts of the Church. Gluttony is certainly a mortal sin of its own nature, for St. Paul says, that the glutton *makes a god of his belly, that he glories in his shame, and destroys his soul.* (Phil. iii. 19.) There is no vice that degrades man so much, and sinks him so low, as gluttony. It reduces him to the level of the beast : for the glutton appears to live for no other purpose than that of eating and drinkinp.

Q. What is the virtue opposed to gluttony ?

A. Temperance, which prevents all excess in eating and drinking.

18. " Temperance " and sobriety are the great remedies against the vice of gluttony. If this virtue be our guide, we shall eat to preserve health and prolong life, not to destroy it. We shall drink to quench thirst, not to drown reason. The means of practising this virtue are—prayer before eating—the thought of the fastings of Jesus Christ and of the saints—the consideration of the eternal feast that we shall enjoy in heaven with God, if, during the time we spend here below, we shall practise mortification, and follow in the footsteps of our Lord, who fasted so often in order to redeem our souls.

Q. What is Envy ?

A. Envy is a sadness or repining at another's good, whether spiritual or temporal, because it seems to lessen our own.

19. " Envy " is a displeasure which we feel within ourselves at our neighbour's prosperity, as if his success lessened our merit and happiness. It is hard to conceive that persons can be found so badly disposed as to be afflicted at the blessings which others enjoy ; and yet it is a matter of ordinary occurrence. " An equal," says St. Augustin, " bears envy towards his equal, because he feels annoyed at not being elevated above him, and regrets to see him enjoy pleasures and riches which he would wish none but himself to enjoy ; an inferior envies his superior, because he cannot be equal to him."

So true it is, that the vice of envy infects almost every class of society. The envious would have no superior, no equal; they would have all, and engross all to themselves. But it may be observed, that few envy those who are greatly superior or far above them, as a poor man does not envy a king, because envy reigns among those who are pretty nearly of equal rank. We must not, however, confound emulation with "envy." We may have a strong desire to procure the advantages and blessings that we see our neighbour enjoy, and to acquire the virtues that we see him practise, without being guilty of "envy," provided we wish not to deprive him of these blessings and favours.

20. "Envy" of its own nature is a mortal sin. St. Paul places it among the sins that exclude from the kingdom of heaven. It is the sin of the devil; for Satan, repining at man's happiness, tempted him to sin, that he might involve him in the same misery with himself; and the first sin, after the fall of Adam, was the envy of Cain, who murdered his brother because God accepted Abel's sacrifice and rejected Cain's. It was the sin of the Jews, who, envious of the sanctity, miracles, and fame of our Saviour, and lest the world should quit them to follow Him, condemned and crucified the Lord of glory. The *daughters* of "envy," or the sins of which it is the source, are: hatred of our neighbour, a desire to injure him, joy at his misfortune, and grief at his good fortune, calumny, detraction, and treachery.

Q. What is the virtue opposed to envy?

A. A true love of our neighbour, which makes us rejoice in his prosperity, as if it were our own.

21. If we love our neighbour as ourselves, we will never envy him. If we wish the same good to others as to ourselves, we will reap more profit than if we enjoyed it ourselves, as by rejoicing at another's prosperity

we make it our own. If ever we find ourselves prone to this odious vice, let us at once have recourse to the remedies against it. The remedies chiefly are: 1. To consider that envy makes us resemble the demon; to recollect that, being all brothers, and members of the same family, of which Jesus Christ is the head, we should have a love for each other, rejoice at each other's happiness, and grieve at each other's misfortune. 2. To speak well of the person who is the object of our jealousy, to praise him on every occasion, to defend his character whenever it is assailed in our presence. If we pursue this course, envy will be soon expelled from our hearts, and brotherly love will reign in its place.

Q. What is Sloth?

A. A sluggish indolence, which makes us rather wish to omit our duty than do ourselves that violence which is necessary for the performance of it.

22. "Sloth" does not merely mean sleeping too much, or spending a great deal of time in idleness; it means more, and that is, neglecting the duties of our state of life, or going through them with reluctance and indifference, whilst employing ourselves in trifles, such as unnecessary visits, useless conversations or diversions. We can incur the guilt of "sloth," though we are ever in motion. A child who prefers play to study is *slothful;* a father who, instead of taking care of his children and servants, spends his time at exhibitions, amusements, and plays, is guilty of "sloth;" a mother who, instead of attending to the cares of her house, spends the whole day in useless visits and unprofitable reading, incurs the guilt of "sloth." In fine, we are *slothful* whenever, through laziness, or an unwillingness to do violence to our inclinations, we neglect those duties which, from our age and condition, we are bound to perform. The *daughters*, or effects of sloth, are: aversion to duty, inconstancy, despair, injury of health, hatred of truth, and of those who announce it, impurity, dissipation of

mind; hardness of heart, and many others. "Sloth" is, of its own nature, a mortal sin; for we learn from the Gospel that Jesus Christ ordered the *unprofitable servant to be cast into exterior darkness.* It is the fruitful source of many other crimes, and can with justice be called *the mother of every vice.*

Q. What virtue is opposed to sloth?

A. The love of labour, and a firm will of zealously fulfilling the duties of our state of life.

23. As a remedy against sloth, we should first learn our duties to God and ourselves, and then perform them with spirit and with pleasure. Every situation of life has its peculiar duties—sickness and health, prosperity and adversity, have their respective duties to fulfil, and we should endeavour to be well instructed as to each of these, and be attentive in the discharge of them. Let us ever be prepared to acquit ourselves faithfully of the duties of our religion, and the duties of our state of life, no matter what it may cost, and what violence we may be forced to do ourselves, often calling to mind the words of our Lord: "Every tree that beareth not good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire." (Matt. xxv. 30.)

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

HUMILITY OF ST. FRANCIS CARRACCIOLO.

St. Francis Carracciolo, founder of the Friars Minor, after having spent many years in Spain, returned to pass a few days at Villa-Santa-Maria, the place of his birth. As soon as the inhabitants recognized him, they ran out in crowds to meet him, showing him every mark of the deepest veneration. His humility took alarm. Standing in the most public part of the town, with his eyes fixed on the ground, he drew forth from his pocket a crucifix, and holding it up to all about him, he said: "It is to this image you should show marks of veneration and love, and not to a miserable sinner such as I am, who have returned among you only to repair the scandals which I had given to you in my young days. Go away, and deprive me not of the fruits of that penance which I am going to

perform for my past sins. Forget me altogether, and recollect that no man can be called just in this life, particularly if he feels his conscience torn for the crimes which he has formerly committed." After addressing the crowd in this strain, he withdrew into a secret place, and on the following day he set out privately for Naples.

THE HEIRS OF A MISER.

A large sum of money was bequeathed by an uncle to his nephews. To celebrate that happy event, a magnificent feast was prepared, and during the evening the deceased uncle was the general topic of discourse. There was scarcely one that had not some anecdote or other to tell of him. Every trifling occurrence that could cast ridicule on the late uncle was called up in turn. Every one told his story in the best way he could, embellishing it with such circumstances as were suggested either by wit or malice. From the nature of their remarks one would be inclined to think that the deceased was the greatest enemy that his inheritors had. When the party at last had tired of their witticisms and mocking jests, they closed the feast by proposing a toast to the memory of the deceased uncle. "Let us drink," they cried out; "let us drink to the health of the old miser." This, O Miser! will be, too, one day, your fate. After hoarding up your money, at the sacrifice of reputation and health, you will bequeath it to those who will rejoice at your death, laugh over your defects, and insult your memory; whilst you yourself will be tormented in hell by its devouring fire, and all the treasures you amassed on earth will not be able to procure a drop of water to cool your burning tongue.

THE DEATH OF CHRYSOARIUS.

St. Gregory the Great tells us that there was one Chrysoarius, a man of quality and very rich, but abounding with vices as much as with wealth, and, above all, addicted to the vile sin of impurity. God, resolving to put a period to his crimes, sent him a severe sickness, of which he died, but in a very extraordinary manner. When death was near, he suddenly perceived a multitude of evil spirits, who presented themselves to him in hideous shapes, and made a show as if they were going immediately to carry him into hell. He began to tremble, look aghast, and in piteous tones cry out for help. He turned himself on every side to avoid the sight of these horrid spectres; but all in vain: wherever he turned his eyes the spectres were dancing before him. After struggling for some time with these wicked spirits, who treated him violently, he began at last to cry out in horrible tones: "Truce till morning, truce till morning." And

whilst howling in this dreadful way, his soul was torn from his body, and in a moment was standing naked and unprotected before the judgment-seat of God. He died in despair.—*St. Greg. Dial.* l. 4.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Why are some sins called capital, or deadly sins?
2. How many are the capital, or deadly sins?
3. Are the capital sins always mortal?
4. In what does the sin of pride consist?
5. Is pride the first, greatest, and most dangerous of all sins?
6. What particular vices flow from pride?
7. Is humility necessary to gain our salvation?
8. In what consists the sin of covetousness?
9. Is covetousness the source of many other vices?
10. What is the best remedy against covetousness?
11. In what does the sin of lust consist?
12. What are the effects of impurity?
13. What is the best means of preserving chastity
14. What do you understand by that anger which God condemns?
15. What evil consequences flow from anger?
16. What means are the best to prevent anger?
17. What do you understand by gluttony?
18. What are the chief remedies against gluttony?
19. What do you mean by the vice of envy?
20. How do you show that envy is a great sin?
21. What are the chief remedies against envy?
22. What is meant by the seventh capital sin—sloth?
23. How are we to fight against sloth?

PRACTICE.

1. Always entertain the greatest horror of the capital sins, for they are the fruitful source of all other crimes.

2. Often reflect on the evil consequences of pride and impurity, that you may never be drawn into the commission of those vile sins.

3. Fly idleness, love labour, and be ever employed at some useful occupation.

PRAYER.

O my God! we have now learned the enormity of the capital

sins—those empoisoned sources from which so many evils flow. Hitherto we have but too often allowed ourselves to be carried away by those vile passions of pride, envy, and anger, without reflecting on the consequences of them. We now feel how guilty we have been, and implore Thy pardon for our frequent transgressions of Thy holy law. We shall evermore labour to root out from our hearts pride, and those other capital sins to which we have been subject. And do Thou, O Lord! support us in our efforts, for without Thy aid we are unable to perform the least good. This grace we ask of Thee, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, under whose protection we shall combat all the capital vices. Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

ON DRUNKENNESS.

Q. What is the most dangerous species of gluttony

A. Drunkenness, which destroys our reasoning faculties, and brings us down to the level of brute beasts.

1. As "Drunkenness" is a vice which is now so prevalent, and that you, dear children, whilst you are young, and strangers to that crying sin, may conceive such a horror of it, as to prevent you from ever indulging in that frightful habit, we shall in this chapter consider the nature and evil consequences of drunkenness, that worst species of gluttony. In the first place, drunkenness brutalizes man. When one drinks to excess, or gets drunk, he is no longer a man, but a beast, for he sinks himself down to the level of the stupid animals around him. Look at the drunkard; he knows not what he says or what he does—he cannot think or reason like a man; he is even lower than the animals that serve him, for they never drink to excess, but keep their appetites within the bounds of nature—he cannot even stand as the beast can. See him staggering on his way, his body shaken with the excess of drink; his

head floating heavily on his shoulders, falling on one side, then on another; his eyes wild; his looks unmeaning; his tongue babbling, yet scarcely able to articulate a word.

2. And he now falls and rolls in the mire with the swine, which even are not so degraded as he, for they have the use of their limbs, but the drunkard has not. See him now assisted to his home by some charitable friend; and as he is on his way, staggering, falling, foaming, rolling his disgusting eyes, and exhaling the fetid fumes of spirits and beer; the children point him out to each other—they follow him, mocking and laughing at him as at some strange looking being. His acquaintances look after him, as he totters home, and they are indignant at the scene; his enemies look at him, and treat him with ridicule; his friends run away as he approaches, for they feel ashamed of him; and his children are in tears, and his wife in agony, when they look upon him.

3. And now, when the drunkard enters his house, what a scene! The wife is on the threshold to meet him, her form bowed down, her face haggard, and her arms fleshless from want. There she stands, with an afflicted mind and broken heart. The drunkard, though not able to stand on his own legs, yet shows a desire to return to the public-house; but the wife holds him up, and with a gentle pressure draws him inside the door. And now he becomes wild and infuriate, like an enraged animal; he curses, he blasphemes; he pours forth from his throat filth and obscenity; he strikes at everything in his way—wife, children, and servants; he has no fear either of God or man.

4. "Who hath woe?" asks Solomon, "whose father hath woe? Who hath contentions? Who fall into pits? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? Surely they that pass their time in wine, and study to drink up their cups." Yes; the

woes of heaven fall thick and fast upon the drunkard. They are written in his very face—they are heard in all his acts. The drunkard dishonours himself like a fool—impoverishes his family like a robber—degrades his relatives like the heartless—disgraces his friends like the ungrateful—brings reproach on his religion like the profane—destroys his body like a murderer, and his soul like an infidel. It has been told of the ancient Spartans, that in order that their children should conceive a loathing for the vice of drunkenness, they were in the habit of making some of their slaves drunk. And to have a horror of that beastly vice, you have only, dear children, to look at the drunkard tottering to his home, supported by his wife on one side, and his neglected and squalid child on the other.

Q. What other evil effects proceed from drunkenness?
A. From drunkenness proceed indiscretion in words, contentions, quarrelling, and fighting.

5. "Indiscretion in our words," is another consequence of drunkenness. The drunkard puts no restraint upon his tongue. Everything that comes to his lips he lets out, without bestowing a thought upon what he is going to say. Now, he must give vent to all his secrets; whoever may be willing to listen, will get the whole tale. The veriest knave will do as a listener, for the drunkard is not over nice in selecting a person to listen to what he has to say. And when he has found listeners, everything connected with himself, his wife, his friends, his business, will be introduced to those about him. He betrays everything; his own secrets—his friends' secrets; he betrays the private affairs of his house; he tells all the particulars of his dealings with this man or that—how much money is due to him, and how much he owes.

6. Who would be the confidential friend of that man who will blab all he knows to the first comer, over his

cups? Who would be the partner in business of that man who will betray his own interest as well as his neighbour's, in a moment when his very intellect is put out of the way? Who would be the wife of that man, who will drag the most sacred concerns of the family through the mire, in the circles of his pot-companions? The drunkard parts with that last attribute of manliness, the power of keeping the knowledge of his own affairs to himself. He is no man, whose inmost secrets lie open to the gaze of every prying idler that crosses his path. The drunkard is as transparent as glass; his very soul is seen through by any designing knave who wishes to extract from him a knowledge of his affairs, his speculations, his intentions with regard to the future. He blabs out everything, and the following morning, seeing how he has been betrayed, he repents, when it is too late.

7. "Drunkenness," too, entails on him many other sorrows—injuries, quarrels, altercations, and fighting, which are the third consequences of that detestable vice. To what are we to attribute the quarrelling, the injuries, the insults, the inhuman fightings, which we now so often witness? To drunkenness. In what place have disputes, dissensions, bickerings, and riots originated? In the public-house. See the drunkard; begin and watch him till he ends his career of intoxication. He has sat at the table, he has filled his glass and taken it off. He again fills his glass, and challenges his pot-companions to do the same, and they do, and drink them off again; and they now become mirthful, and a third glass is taken off, and the mirth has maddened into riot; anger springs up, and those who shook hands across the table after the second glass or tumbler, now hurl at each other the most injurious language, consign each other to damnation, and blaspheme the name of the living God! And now they proceed to blows, and a deadly strife takes place between them, and the

frightful consequence is the spilling of blood, and, but too often, the loss of life.

8. Is it not to drunkenness that we have to attribute those "factions fights," which had been so long a disgrace to the country, and which have sent so many to penal settlements, to drag out a wretched and miserable existence, far away from the home of their fathers? Has not drunkenness conducted many and many to the gaol, the iron gang, and to the gallows? Oh! to what a train of roads does drunkenness point! Like some frightful finger-post erected upon earth by the infernal fiends, to conduct to their dominions, drunkenness points out the way to every vice. Drunkenness points in one direction to dissoluteness, debauchery, disease, the hospital, death. In another direction to evil company, cursing, swearing, gambling, profanity, infidelity, final impenitence. Again, to idleness, carelessness, destruction of property, ruin of family, poverty, destitution, death in abandonment. Drunkenness leads to riotousness, quarrelling, injuries, insults, inhuman fightings, sudden death. Drunkenness leads to evil companions, thefts, robberies, plots, murders, the gaol, the iron gang, the gallows. Drunkenness points to weakness, gloominess, wretchedness, melancholy, wild fantasies, black horrors, madness.

9. Follow the drunkard into the bosom of his family—look at him like a roaring lion, carrying distress and desolation into his home, exercising on every side a sort of carnage; he bellows forth like an enraged animal; he subverts, he hacks, he tares, he breaks everything that he can lay his hand on. The sobs and lamentations of his wife, the cries and tears of his children, so far from moving him to mercy and pity, only fire him the more with madness. Like a fury, he flies to them, arms himself with a poker, or whatever else lies in his way, and deals around, on wife and children, murderous strokes. It is in vain that the

broken-hearted wife holds up in her arms before her husband their innocent child: nothing can check the madness of the savage father; both wife and child become the victims of his brutality, for, through a refinement of cruelty, he drags his wife by the hair, casts her and her child with violence out of doors, and forces her to seek outside some place to shelter herself and her infant from the cold and severity of the night. Oh, drunkenness, see here your savage work!

Q. What more evil results follow from drunkenness?
A. Drunkenness is a fruitful source of impurity, and it also causes destruction of property, ruin of family, and loss of life.

10. "Impurity" is another consequence of drunkness. The wise man has long ago said, in the book of Proverbs, that "Wine is a luxurious thing, and drunkness riotous." (Prov. xx. 1.) And St. Paul, in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, warns us against "being drunk with wine wherein is luxury." Spirituous liquors inflame that already unruly passion of lust; and when our reason is disturbed by drinking to excess, what can curb us from rushing headlong into every kind of impurity? Is it not from that vile source of drunkenness that flow those immodest songs, those fearfully obscene words, that strike in our ears from morning till night? The holiness of the marriage state, the fidelity of wife to husband, and of husband to wife, is altogether lost sight of by the drunkard.

11. Look at a woman, even, who drinks to excess, and see to what a miserable state she is reduced. She was once fondly attached to her husband; she was dear to her friends, beloved by her relatives, and esteemed by all her acquaintances. But look at her now as she frequents the whiskey shop. See that face, that was once meek and lovely with the pure beams of innocence, now convulsed with all the diabolical passions which issue from the infernal pit. Listen to that tongue, which

once gave expression only to what was chaste and pure and good, but which now pours forth in torrents, impurity, obscenity, and ungodliness. See her now coming from the house of drunkenness, and hastening to the den of infamy; or like some unnatural monster, going home to her family, to suckle her children with her vices. And a few short years ago she was a stranger to almost every house except her own home and the church.

12. Must we not, then, with St. Jerome, say, that drunkenness feeds and stirs up the flames of impurity, as oil feeds and excites the flames of fire when cast upon it. "I can never believe," said a Father of the Church, "that an intemperate man can be a chaste man." Was it not this vice of drinking to excess that rendered Sodom so impure as to call for its destruction by fire and brimstone? Lot had not been guilty of incest until he had taken the wine presented him by his daughters: and the Israelites had not sinned with the Moabites until they had first drank intoxicating liquors with them.

13. "Destruction of property and ruin of family" are also the inevitable consequences of drunkenness. Go to the drunkard's house, and see the havoc that there meets your eye. Look for a moment into that dwelling, the abode of misery and want, aye, and too often of guilt. Its walls are black and broken, from neglect and decay; filth and ruin fill up the measure of its wretchedness; and not an article of furniture is there to relieve its dilapidated appearance. In a corner of that filthy, dingy apartment, the embers of a scanty fire are burning out; and hanging over those dying embers you see some emaciated figure, and there is no mistaking that bowed-down, broken-hearted creature. Her wrinkled brow, her pallid cheek, her bloodless lips, her trembling hands, her look of deep, unutterable agony and despair, too clearly point out the wretched wife of the drunkard. He had, at one time, sworn before the altar of God to

love, cherish, and defend her; but her present condition shows how that vow had been fulfilled.

14. Her thoughts are now turned back to bygone days—those days when she was happy and joyous under her father's roof. She is contrasting those days of peace and plenty with the misery and destitution of the present time, and she shudders at her husband's guilt. Notwithstanding the cruel treatment she receives at his hands; despite the kicks and blows his brutal temper inflicts on her, she still clings to him; and with anxious care she tries every resource to bring him back from his desperate courses, to lead him away from those companions who are luring him on to sure destruction. For the sake of the father of her famished children, she bears up against his cruel treatment. To bring home her husband from the public-house, she, every night, exposes herself to insult and indignity; and for her pains she receives from the brutal creature curses and blows.

15. Visit that abode again; ascend the broken staircase to the garret dark and gloomy. The rain is entering through the broken slates of the roof, and is pattering on the crazy loft. There is a feel of damp, unwholesome air around. A flickering rushlight shows some dark object in the corner. Go near—it is a poor creature lying on the remains of a straw bed, with scarcely a rag to protect her from the inclemency of the night! And oh, what a face! On every lineament of it, want, misery, wrong, injustice, cruelty are fearfully written. Her dying eyes are looking for the last time on the shivering skeletons huddled near her, that they may communicate a little warmth to each other; and then, after a look up to heaven, and a prayer breathed forth to the Father of the orphan, that He may protect her wretched offspring, those eyes close for ever in this world; and the children have no longer one to care or tend them, for their mother is dead, and their father is a drunkard. Oh! drunkards, what woe, and misery, and

wretchedness, and guilt do you not entail on yourselves and your family!

16. "Loss of life," too, follows from drunkenness. St. Chrysostom thus describes the effects of intemperance:—"Paleness, weakness, laziness, folly." The drunkard ruins his health, shortens his days, and brings himself to an early grave. Look at the man who frequents the dram shop, and is seen there at all hours, who knows no greater pleasure than that of drinking; the perpetual tippler, the professional drunkard. See the appearance he presents—pale, hanging cheeks, red, ulcered eyes, blue, livid lips, trembling hands, a body swaying to and fro, and legs weak and bending. See his tottering gait, his faltering steps, as he passes you by. Death has already marked him as its own, his days are numbered, for not one but many disorders prey on him, and will soon put a period to his existence. And how can it be otherwise? What constitution can bear up against the inroads of drunkenness? The most eminent medical men tell us, that the drinking of spirituous liquors has killed as many thousands as there are stars in the sky; and that more have died by this slow but sure poison than by any other kind of poison: and on that account they say that the following inscription might be justly written on the tomb of every drunkard: —*Here lies a self-murderer.*

Q. What is the most frightful consequences of drunkenness?
A. The most frightful consequences of drunkenness is an unhappy and wretched death, and the everlasting damnation of the soul.

17. The final and most alarming result of drunkenness is "an unhappy and wretched death," followed by "the everlasting damnation of the soul." As we have already seen, dear children, the drunkard, during life, has indulged in every excess—has violated almost every command of God. He has been guilty of blasphemy, impurity, quarrelling, fighting, destroying his means,

ruining his family, making outcasts of his wife and children. After such a career of vice, now behold the drunkard's closing days; see his dying moments, the end of his earthly existence. There he lies on the bed of sickness and death, the victim of his own blind folly and crime. What are now his thoughts? What are those thoughts that cause that frightful convulsion of his frame, that spread over his face that fearful livid hue? What are those thoughts that shake his withered body? What, but the recollection of the past and the dread of the future! Behind is horror, before is despair.

18. His misspent life, his ruined frame, his wasted energies, his folly, his crime, his guilt—all rush on his mind in a terrible array, and cannot be shut out. At that awful moment the power of conscience swells its voice to the mightiness of thunder; and it is that which convulses him. With terrible distinctness he counts over the many acts of cruelty he had been guilty of towards his wife and unoffending family, his total neglect of them, his disregard of all their wants, and his exclusive attention to the gratification of his own vile passions. In every item that he counts up, he reads his own condemnation. Where, now, are his wife and children? Why are they not now around his bed, to give him some consolation in this his hour of trial?

19. Neither wife nor children has he now! The wife died of a broken heart, and the son, having the father's wicked example before him, grew up a perfect savage, uncurbed by one salutary precept, bidding defiance equally to the laws of God and man—every day sinking deeper and deeper into crime, until he was transported to a penal settlement, or, perhaps, expiated his guilt on a scaffold before the view of the populace. And his daughter, whose presence would now be a blessing to him, where is she? Lost! for ever sunk in shame beyond redemption! That dying father was the agent of

her ruin; for by his brutality and savage treatment, he forced her from her home, drove her an outcast on the world, and she soon became a prey to the lust and depravity of her seducer. Neither wife nor child now surrounds his bed; but their forms seem to hover around him in dreadful shapes. They seem to mock and laugh at his mortal agony, and grasp at him with their long, skinny fingers!

20. He is now writhing under the effects of *delirium tremens*, and, like a great many of his companions who have gone before him, he cannot avail himself of the last moments of life to turn to God. He is now incapable of sorrow and repentance, for his mind is wandering, and his intellect is a perfect ruin. He sees in imagination swarms of horrid creatures circling round his body, and threatening to devour him. So distempered in his brain, that legions of devils appear in the room. Demons of hideous shape dance round his head, and hold him in such torture, as cannot be conceived by any one who has not experienced it. He shouts forth in frightful accents to those about him, to save him from those infernal fiends, who want to take his soul into hell. He now rivets his eyes on a corner of the room, and imagines that he sees his ill-treated wife and neglected children—now some years dead—mocking at him, in his agony, and reproaching him with his former neglect and inhuman treatment; and he shouts forth to have them removed.

21. How comes all this misery? Is there no mark of vengeance here? How happens it that the drunkard's brain generates such myriads of horrid monster forms? The finger of God is here. His justice has at last overtaken the drunkard. The hour has come, and the tempest of God bursts. Whilst the drunkard crawled along the path of vice, without a sense of shame or a feeling of his condition, or a thought of his family, or a reflection towards his soul, or one glimpse of his

destination, God was silent; but God was not indifferent. God, though silent, saw all, and took a note of all; and whilst the drunkard was heaping up crimes, God heaped vengeance. Hear Himself speaking by the mouth of Isaias:—"I have been silent, I have held my peace, I was patient; my words shall break forth as one in labour; I will scatter them; I will wrap them up together in a whirlpool!" The drunkard abandoned God during life; God abandons the drunkard at death. During life the drunkard lived regardless of God's law; and in his last hour God is regardless of him; for, says St. Paul, "neither idolaters nor drunkards shall possess the kingdom of God."

22. The priest of God, indeed, is sent for to prepare the dying sinner for his long journey. He approaches his bed; he endeavours to infuse some religious comfort into his guilty heart; he speaks words of consolation to him; he desires him to rely on the mercies of Christ, who shed His blood for him. But the wretched creature is stupified: he cannot pray; he knows not how to pray; he never, through life, thought of, much less practised, that sweet and holy duty; he is now raving in his agony; devils surround his bed; the father and mother, whose hearts he broke, the wife and children, whom he beat, ill-treated, and left to starve, whilst he drank his earnings in the spirit shop; all the evils of his life start up before him in terrible array, and pierce his brain with madness.

23. He shrinks back in affright. The tide of life is now ebbing fast from his heart. The clammy drops of death are on his brow. His brain reels; darkness comes over his sight; the last sigh is quivering on his lips; and in a desparing struggle, the soul is separated from the body, and in an instant the drunkard stands alone and unprotected before the judgment-seat of God, to answer for the crimes of an ill-spent life.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE DRUNKARD'S DEATH.

One night a priest was called out to attend a man in *delirum tremens*. He had for some years pursued an evil course, and a short time before, through the exciting madness of drink, had struck his wife a blow of which she died. The priest exhorted him to repentance, telling him that his hours were numbered, and that he should shortly appear in the presence of his Maker, and to endeavour to make his peace with Him, as it was not too late to repent. "Repent!" said the drunkard, with a ghastly look; "there is no repentance for a wretch like me. I shall be damned, damned for all eternity. All last night, all this day I have seen my murdered wife and child standing by this bed and threatening me. Sometimes they pointed with their shadowy fingers to the corners of the room, and there I beheld the infernal fiends mocking at me, jibing me. Sometimes those damned spirits would crowd round the bed, and bend their hated faces over mine; then they would grin at me, spit at me, and with hellish laughter tell me what a welcome they would give my soul to-night in hell. No, sir, I have sinned beyond redemption. There is no mercy for me. I have abused every grace of God, and murdered those two angels now in heaven. Sir, the sacraments you would give me would only increase my damnation." In vain the priest attempted to combat his despair. He was deaf to all his entreaties. He would not confess—said it was useless; he could not, would not repent. And then the current of his mind changed. He broke out into a torrent of blasphemy too horrible to be repeated; it was as if seven devils and more possessed his soul. Then he would pitifully appeal to hide him from his wife and child, whose spirits haunted him. Then the fragment of a ribald song would he sing; and then join in a rambling chorus, as if he were drinking with the former associates of his debaucheries. Then he would put forth the most frantic exclamations of fear and agony—shouting as none but a dying, despairing sinner can shout, that fearful devils were crowding round his bed to carry his soul into hell, the blue and surging flames of which he distinctly saw.....At the midnight hour, when the booming sound of the church clock swept dull and heavy through the air, he gave a long, terrible howl, and expired.

ALARMING EFFECTS OF DRUNKENNESS.

Of the many crimes, disorders, and excesses resulting from drunkenness, perhaps there is not one so horrible and tragical as that which occurred in Africa in St. Augustin's time. A young man,

named Cyril, was very much addicted to intemperance, and passed a great part of his life in dram-shops, with the companions of his debaucheries. One day, having very much indulged in that vile passion, he returned home, and commenced a fearful attack on the life of one of his sisters, by frequent attempts to stab her. The father, hearing the cries of his child, became alarmed, and hurried to the spot; but no sooner had he made his appearance, than the enraged son gave him a fatal stroke, and thus steeped his hands in his father's blood! He now rushed on another of his sisters, who came to the defence of the old man, and to rescue him from the murderous hands of the unnatural son; and she, too, was stabbed to death by him. How many crimes, what guilt perpetrated in one day by a drunken son! St. Augustin was at once informed of this disastrous event, and although he had already preached twice on that day, he assembled the people for the third time, mounted the pulpit, and with tears in his eyes, and a heart surcharged with grief, detailed to his hearers the terrible crimes which had just been committed by the hands of a brutal son. The entire congregation broke forth into cries and lamentations; they were seized with alarm and dismay at such enormities. They feared that the vengeance of God would hurl down the lightnings of heaven on their city, for having produced such a monster. St. Angustin then took occasion to point out to them the excesses to which drunkenness leads. His tears and sighs were more effective than his words and discourses.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. In what does a drunkard resemble a beast?
2. Describe the drunkard as he is on his way home.
3. What are the consequences of the drunkard's return to his home?
4. What are evils that the drunkard entails on himself and others?
5. In what way is a drunkard the betrayer of his secrets?
6. Is the drunkard easily induced to make known his business?
7. How does drunkenness cause quarelling and fighting?
8. What are the various other consequences of drunkenness?
9. Describe the conduct of the drunkard among his family.
10. Can you prove from Scripture that drunkenness causes impurity?
11. What are the effects produced by drunkenness on a woman?
12. Mention, from the Bible, some instances of the evil effects of excess in drinking?

13. Describe the appearance of the drunkard's house, a the condition of his wife?

14. In what manner does the wife act towards her drunken husband?

15. Describe the dying scene of the drunkard's wife?

16. What appearance does the body of the drunkard present?

17. What is it that most torments the drunkard, in his dying hour?

18. With what does the drunkard's conscience reproach him on the bed of death?

19. Why are not the drunkard's family present at his death?

20. Describe the drunkard under the effects of *delirium tremens*?

21. Is God's justice seen in the last moments of the drunkard?

22 Does the dying drunkard profit by the admonitions of the priest?

23. Describe the last agony of the drunkard.

PRACTICE.

1. As drunkenness is a crime that lowers us to a level with the brute, hold it in the greatest detestation.

2. Resolve, when young, never to transgress the bounds of temperance, and let no one induce you to break that resolution.

3. Often beg of God to preserve you from being guilty of any excess in drinking, lest you may be excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER.

We have now, O Lord! learned the frightful enormities consequent on the vile sin of drunkenness. We are now truly convinced of its filthy nature. Give us grace, O Lord, to be sober and temperate at all our repasts. Grant that we may never abuse Thy gifts and blessings to our own destruction. Preserve us from falling into any criminal excesses. We now promise never to offend Thee by the sin of drunkenness. Do Thou, O Lord, aid us in keeping that holy resolution. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON HELL AND PURGATORY.

Q. Where shall they go who die in mortal sin?
A. To hell for all eternity.

1. To go "to hell for all eternity" is, dear children, an alarming thought! And it is no less true than alarming, that if we "die in mortal sin" the gates of heaven will be closed against us, shall never be opened to us, and that our souls shall at once descend into "hell," and there remain for all eternity, without the slightest hope of ever being released from that frightful prison. As soon as we have sinned mortally our names are blotted out from the book of life, every title to heaven is lost, and if we die in that state, our place will for ever be among the damned. One single "mortal sin" is enough to send us to hell for ever; for, by one mortal sin, we become enemies of God, lose His friendship and grace, become leagued with the devil; and dying an enemy of God, we cannot expect to enjoy the rewards promised to His friends, but must meet with the punishment with which, during life, He so often threatened us.

2. Were we to live to a very old age, and, during the long course of our lives, were we to spend all our days in fasting and praying; were we to perform every good work of charity and religion—relieving the distressed, comforting the afflicted, converting the wicked; were we even to practise all the severe penitential works of the saints of the desert; were we to do all these things during the many years of our lives, and should we be so miserable as to consent to "mortal sin"—even a sin

of thought—in the last hour or moments of that long life, and die in that mortal sin, all our prayers and fasts, our religious exercises and works of mercy, all our austerities would be forgotten, and our poor souls would be condemned "to hell for all eternity."

3. Ah! dear children, what a frightful thought is that! And yet we have committed, perhaps, many mortal sins —thousands, perhaps, though young we are! Look back on your life, and, though short it be, some of you will find that you have many times offended God mortally by impure words and actions, by cursing, fighting, making your parents very angry, or by neglecting Mass on Sundays and holidays. Ah! so guilty, and yet so young! so many sins committed, and so few years yet spent! What thanks should you not return to God for having spared you until now! Had He cut the thread of your life after you had committed the first mortal sin, where would your place now be? Where? "In hell!" And there you should remain "for all eternity," enduring the pains and sufferings of the damned.

Q. Where do they go who die in venial sin?
A. To Purgatory.

4. We have already seen that "venial sin" is a great evil, and that although it does not destroy the friendship that exists between God and us, still that it lessens it, and renders us displeasing in the sight of God. If we "die in venial sin," we cannot at once enter heaven, as we are not fully reconciled with God, not having died in perfect friendship or love with Him. Our Lord tells us that *nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of heaven;* and as "venial sin" is a defilement, but not one that has merited hell, there must be some middle place between heaven and hell, where the venial sin, in which we die, shall be expiated; and that place of expiation is called "Purgatory," because it purges or cleanses us from the defilement of "venial sin."

Q. What is Purgatory?

A. A place or state of punishment in the other life, where some souls suffer for a time before they can go to heaven. (Matt. xii. 32.)

5. "Purgatory" means a place where one is *purged* or cleansed from the *relics* of mortal sin, or from the stains contracted by venial sin. It is called a "place of punishment," because the punishment due to sin is suffered in "purgatory." This punishment is to be undergone only by "some souls," that is, by those who die in venial sin—for those who die in mortal sin, as we have already seen, will go to hell—or by those who, though not dying in actual venial sin, have not as yet fully satisfied the justice of God for the debt of temporal punishment due to their grievous sins, the guilt of which had been pardoned in the sacrament of Penance. The sufferings endured in purgatory are only "for a time;" for when we shall have remained in purgatory until, by our punishment, the justice of God will be satisfied, we shall then be set free from that prison and admitted into heaven.

Q. Is it certain that there is a purgatory or middle state between heaven and hell?

A. Yes; for the doctrine of purgatory is an article of Catholic faith founded on God's Word.

6. The doctrine of "Purgatory" has been clearly defined by the Council of Trent in the following passages: "If any one saith, that after the grace of justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged, either in this world or in the next in *purgatory*, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened to him, let him be anathema." (*Conc. Trid.* Ses. 6, Ca. xxx.)

7. The doctrine of purgatory is proved from the Old

and New Testament, and also from tradition. In the second book of *Machabees* we read that Judas, the valiant commander, sent to Jerusalem twelve thousand drachms of silver, in order that sacrifice should be offered for those who had been slain in battle. And why? Because, as the passage in that Sacred Book says: "It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." (2 Machab. xii.) But if it be a holy work and a wholesome practice to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins, there must be some souls who stand in need of our prayers; but as the souls in heaven require not the aid of our prayers, and as the souls in hell can receive no benefit from them, there must be some third or middle state in which some souls are detained, and that third place is "purgatory." It may be objected by Protestants, that this book of *Machabees* is not canonical, or is not the Word of God; but such should recollect that it has been recognised as canonical from the earliest ages, and always acknowledged as such by the Catholic Church, on whose authority alone, they know the Scriptures, admitted by them, to be God's Word.

8. From the New Testament a great many passages occur in support of the same doctrine. "Whosoever," says Christ, "speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, *neither* in this world, *nor* in the world to come." (Matt. xii.) This passage clearly proves that some sins are forgiven in the next world; for sins connot be remitted in heaven, as no sin can enter there; nor can they be remitted in hell, for "out of hell there is no redemption;" therefore, there must be some middle place between heaven and hell, where some sins are forgiven, and that middle place is "purgatory."

9. St. Paul tells us, that "the fire shall try every

man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide. . . . he shall receive a reward, if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved so as by fire." (1 Cor. iii.) Now, as there can be no pain, or suffering, or fire in heaven; and as the fire of hell is not for trying a man's work, but for tormenting those who have been already *tried* and damned, the fire mentioned by the Apostle as *trying a man's work* must be the fire of purgatory; therefore, according to St. Paul, there is a purgatory.

10. St. John says, in his Apocalypse, that nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of heaven: "And there shall not enter into it anything defiled." (Apoc. xxi. 27.) From this passage it follows, that a person guilty of the very smallest sin cannot enter heaven, because he is rendered *defiled* and unclean by it, in some degree. Neither can he be damned for it, because nothing but *deadly* sin is punished with eternal flames. There must, therefore, be a *middle state*, where some sins are both punished and expiated—and this *middle state* is called purgatory—because in *heaven* there is no punishment, nor sins to be punished, and "out of hell there is no redemption." St. Peter tell us that Christ, after His death, "preached to those spirits who were in prison." (1 Peter, iii. 19.) Where were these *spirits?* They were not in heaven, for in heaven they would require no preaching; they were not in hell, for there preaching could not be of the least use to them; therefore, they must be in some middle place, where the preaching of Christ could be of some benefit to them; and this middle state is what is called "purgatory."

11. Tradition, and the unanimous testimony of the Fathers, is no less decided on the doctrine of purgatory. St. Ephrem orders prayers for the repose of his soul after death. St. Chrysostom says: "The tears of the living are not useless to the dead: "prayers and alms relieve them." (*Hom.* 1 *Ep. ad Corinth.*) St. Jerome

in his Epistle to Pammachius, says : " It is customary to strew the graves of the female dead with flowers, but you have followed a better usage, in strewing the grave of your wife with alms for the *solace of her soul.*" St. Augustin, in his Confessions, prays for his mother, Monica, and beseeches God to inspire all who shall read his book to remember at the alter, Monica, and his father, Patricius. He says: " I pray for the sins of my mother, hear me, by the remedy of His wounds, who hung on the cross, and sitting on the right hand intercedes for us. I know she showed mercy, and forgave from her heart all debtors ; forgive her also her debts." (*Con.* Lib. ix. c. 13.) And on the 37th Psalm he prays thus : " Purify me, O Lord, in this life, that I may not require the application of that fire by which souls are tried in the next." Could the great St. Augustin more clearly show that there is some place, which is *neither hell*—for no one can be there *forgiven—nor heaven*—for in heaven no *forgiveness* is required—but a *middle place*, between heaven and hell, and that middle state Catholics name purgatory.

12. It has been always the belief of the Church that there is a purgatory ; for the Church always prayed for the dead, and, consequently, must believe the dead were in a place where prayer could be of use to them ; but this place could not be heaven or hell, therefore it must be purgatory. Our very reason ought to convince us that there is a purgatory. Is it not true that there are certain sins called venial, which, indeed, sully the soul, but destroy not its sanctifying grace, which is the life of the soul, or dissolve the friendship of God ? And shall a soul so sullied be condemned to hell ? No ; God's justice would not allow that. Again, if nothing *defiled can enter heaven*, shall such a soul be admitted at once into heaven ? No. Well, then, there must be a purgatory or place of punishment, where just souls make satisfaction for the slight offences of which they had been guilty : then there is a Purgatory.

Q. Of what nature are the pains which souls suffer in purgatory?
A. The souls in purgatory are deprived of the happiness of seeing God, and tormented by fire without being consumed.

13. The Church has made no decision as to the nature of the pains of purgatory; and all that can be said of them is, that they are most severe and dreadful, and that the more sins we have to atone for, the greater shall be our sufferings in purgatory. Some of the saints of God tell us, that the torments of purgatory are not inferior to those of hell, except in duration—those of hell have no end, but those of purgatory are but for a time; that the fire is the same as that of hell, created to cause pain and torture; that our earthly fire is as painted fire compared to it, and that all the evils of this world, and all the sufferings and torments of the martyrs, fall far below the pains endured in purgatory. Thomas of Aquinas has said, not only that the *least* pain of purgatory was greater than the greatest pain on earth, but greater than all the pains of earth put together. See, then, dear children, what you must suffer hereafter, for sins which you now think so little about—lying, quarrelling, sloth, remaining away sometimes from school and catechism. These pains of purgatory you will certainly endure, if you do not, while you are here below, make full satisfaction to God for your sins.

Q. How long will the suffering souls remain in purgatory?
A. That suffering souls will remain in purgatory until they have fully satisfied the justice of God.

14. Christ Himself declares, as you have been already told, that *no one shall go out from the prison until the last farthing be paid;* that is, until full satisfaction be made for sin, and the soul be perfectly cleansed from every spot or stain. But what length of time in purgatory will be required for that full satisfaction? We cannot tell. Some souls will have to spend a very long time "in purgatory," and others not so long, and more only a very short time, just as they have greater or lesser satisfaction to make.

Sister Francesca, of Pampeluna, tells us, in her revelations, that among some hundreds of cases of souls suffering in purgatory, by far the greater number suffered thirty, forty, or sixty years; and that she beheld the souls of many fervent Carmelites suffering in purgatory, ten, twenty, thirty, sixty years after their death, and yet not near their deliverance, as many of them told her. And "in purgatory" time seems longer than it really is, and even one day appears as long as a year, on account of the great torturing pain endured there. In the Franciscan Chronicles there are recorded many instances of souls appearing an hour or two after death, who thought they had been many years "in purgatory." And such may be the purgatory of those who shall survive until the last day.

Q. Have the souls in purgatory any source of consolation?

A. Yes; the love for God, and the assurance that they shall one day possess Him, is a great source of consolation to them.

15. The souls "in purgatory" suffer, indeed, intense pain; but yet they are not without their consolations, which are love of God, and a certain hope of one day enjoying Him in His glory. In the first place, the love of the soul for God, is a source of consolation, for that love sweetens, in some manner, all its pains, and causes it to rejoice at them, because they are a holy ordinance of God. As the soul loves God with the purest affection, and knows its sufferings to be in accordance with His holy will, in order to its purification, it conforms itself perfectly to the Divine decree. While in purgatory, it sees that this is pleasing God; it has His holy will alone in view, and well knows that its purification is necessary that it may enter heaven all fair and lovely. "I do not believe," says St. Catherine, "that it is possible to find a contentment to compare with that of the souls in purgatory, unless it be the contentment of the saints in paradise.

Indeed, so far as the will is concerned, we can hardly say that the pains are pains at all, so contentedly do the souls rest in the appointments of God, to whose will pure love unites them. But this contentment does not take away one iota of the pain; nay, it is the retarding of love from the possession of its object which causes the pain." Thus, the souls in purgatory have at once the greatest contentment and the greatest suffering.

16. In the second place, *the certain hope* of possessing God is another source of comfort to the souls in purgatory. Their lot is fixed; a happy eternity will be their portion hereafter; no longer doubt—no longer uncertainty—no longer any risk—no longer any fear. In a few days the soul shall say: I will be in possession of God; the heavens will be opened to me—I now see the place that I will occupy, and in a short time I shall take possession of it. My sufferings will soon end; they will be changed into a torrent of delights: God is holding out His hand to me; He is calling me, I shall soon fly into His bosom. At this view, the soul almost forgets its sufferings, for joy is so mixed with grief, as nearly to drown pain. Such, dear children, is the way in which God tempers the chastisements which His justice forces Him to exercise against the souls who had not fully expiated their guilt before death. He sweetens them by the unction of His grace and His love, and by the confidence with which He inspires those poor suffering souls.

Q. Do any others go to Purgatory besides those who die in venial sin?

A. Yes; all who die indebted to God's justice, on account of mortal sin.

17. *As nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of heaven,* so a soul leaving this world in the friendship of God,

but sullied with the stains of smaller sins, cannot at once go to heaven. Neither can she be condemned to hell, because she is in friendship with God, for venial sins do not banish the grace of God from the soul, nor break our friendship with Him. Therefore, a soul leaving the world guilty of venial sin goes to purgatory, and is there confined for a time, till by suffering she shall be cleansed and purged from all the defilements of venial sins, and rendered fit to be admitted to the presence and enjoyment of God.

18. Not only those who "die in venial sin," go to purgatory, but also all those "who die indebted to God's justice on account of mortal sin." Though "mortal sin," as to its eternal punishment, be forgiven, still there remains due to it a *temporal* punishment; and to satisfy the justice of God for that temporal debt, souls "go to purgatory," and remain there until that debt be fully paid, for God will not admit any soul to enter heaven, until the debt contracted by that soul shall be paid, even to the *last farthing*: "Amen, I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing." (Matt. v. 26.)

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE VISION OF ST. PERPETUA.

St. Perpetua, martyr, who lived in the early part of the second century, relates the following vision which she had of her deceased brother: "A few days after receiving sentence, when we were altogether in prayer, I happened to name Dinocrates, at which I was astonished, because I had not before had him in my thoughts, and I at that moment knew that I ought to pray for him. This I began to do with great fervour and sighing before God: and the same night I had the following vision: I saw Dinocrates coming out of a dark place, where there were many others, exceedingly hot and thirsty; his face was dirty, his complexion pale, with the ulcer in his face, of which he died at seven years of age, and it was for him that I prayed. There seemed a great distance between him and me,

so that it was impossible for us to meet each other. Near him stood a vessel full of water, whose brim was higher than the statue of an infant. He attempted to drink, but though he had water he could not reach it. This mightily grieved me, and I awoke. By this I knew my brother was in pain, but I trusted I could by prayer relieve him. So I began to pray for him, beseeching God, with tears day and night, that He would grant my request, as I continued to do, until we were removed to the camp prison, being destined for a public show on the festival of Cæsar Geta. The day we were in the stocks I had this vision: I saw the place which I had beheld dark before, now luminous, and Dinocrates, with his body very clean and well clad, refreshing himself, and, instead of a wound, a scar only. I awoke, and I knew he was relieved from pain."

CONVERSION OF A PROTESTANT COUNTESS.

The Countess of Strafford, before her conversion to the Catholic religion, had frequent interviews with Monsigneur de la Mothe, Bishop of Amiens, whose discourses made a very lasting impression on her mind. But that which most affected her was a sermon preached by him to the Ursulines of Amiens, on the feast of St. John the Baptist. When the sermon had concluded, she felt an ardent desire of professing the same belief as the preacher, who had edified her so much. She had, however, some doubts about the Mass and purgatory. These doubts she laid before the bishop. Without entering into any arguments on the subject of her doubts, or directly attacking her prejudices, he thus answered her: "My lady, you know the Bishop of London, and, I am sure, you repose the fullest confidence in him. Very well. Now, I entreat you to send him word of what I am going to say, which is this: 'The Bishop of Amiens has said one thing which surprises me, and it is this, that if you are able to disprove that St. Augustin said Mass, and prayed for the dead, and particularly for his mother, he himself will at once become a Protestant.'" This advice was followed; the Bishop of London sent no reply to the letter, but merely said to the bearer of it, that Lady Strafford was inhaling infectious air, and that his writing to her would produce very little effect. The silence of one in whom she confided so much, completely opened the eyes of the Countess, and not long after she abjured her errors before the Bishop of Amiens.—*Life of M. de la Mothe.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What shall become of our souls, if we die in mortal sin?

2. If we die in mortal sin, shall we have any merit for the good works of our lives?

3. Should we thank God for having preserved our lives until now?

4. If we die in venial sin, why cannot we at once go to heaven?

5. Who are they who go to purgatory?

6. What says the Council of Trent about purgatory?

7. Can you prove the doctrine of purgatory from the Old Testament?

8. Can you prove the doctrine of purgatory from the New Testament?

9. What does St. Paul say in reference to purgatory?

10. What do you conclude from the texts of St. John and St. Peter?

11. What do the Holy Fathers say in reference to purgatory?

12. Can you prove from reason, that there must be a purgatory?

13. Of what nature are the sufferings in purgatory?

14. How long will souls remain suffering in purgatory?

15. Is the love of God a solace to the souls in purgatory?

16. Does the hope of enjoying God comfort the souls in purgatory?

17. Why cannot a soul, who dies in venial sin, be condemned to hell?

18. Do any others, but those who die in venial sin, go to purgatory?

PRACTICE.

1. Firmly believe in the doctrine of purgatory, as it is an article of our holy faith.

2. Often reflect on the rigor of the pains of purgatory, that you may so live here as to have little to suffer hereafter.

3. Carefully avoid venial sins, for they will condemn you to suffer in purgatory.

PRAYER.

O God of all holiness! I know and believe that nothing defiled can enter Thy heavenly kingdom, for *even the heavens are not pure in Thy sight.* Knowing this, O Lord! I will for the future purify my soul, every day, by acts of penance, submission to Thy holy will, and resignation under all the trials and crosses of this life. I will carefully avoid all those faults which, though venial, shall be punished severely hereafter in purgatory. Grant me the grace to grow up every day in Thy love and service, to observe even Thy least commands, to make satisfaction for my sins, that after death I may not long be detained from Thy loving embraces in heaven. Mother of God pray for me, that I may aim at perfection in all my works. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

ON ATONEMENT FOR SIN, AND PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

Q. WHEN God forgives mortal sin, as to the guilt of it, and the eternal punishment it deserved, does He require temporary punishment to be suffered for it.

A. Yes; very often, and for our correction, and to deter us from relapsing into sin; and that we should make some atonement to His offended justice and goodness. (Num. xiv. and 2 Kings, xii.)

1. Although, by means of the sacrament of Penance, "the guilt of sin" has been forgiven by God, and the eternal punishment it deserved remitted, yet His justice requires that we should suffer for it "temporary punishment." We find in the Holy Scriptures, that God often required "temporary punishment" to be suffered by those whose sins He had forgiven. When in the desert Moses struck the rock *twice*, that water might issue from it, God was offended by it—for striking a *second* time implied a doubt of the subsequent event—and though He forgave the sin, He severely punished him for it, by ordering him out of life before he should enter the land of promise. (Num. xx.) We read in the Second Book of Kings, that the Prophet David had committed two grievous crimes—adultery and murder—and that God sent the Prophet Nathan to him to reproach him with his guilt. David humbled himself and confessed at once his sin, saying "I have sinned"—*peccavi;* and the Prophet told him that the Lord had pardoned his sins, as to their "guilt" and "eternal punishment;"

but because, he had given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, for this thing his son should die. (2 Kings, xii. 14.) And, accordingly, the child which was born to him of Bethsabee died. Here we see a most severe sentence of "temporary punishment" passed upon David, and executed upon him with the greatest rigour, even though the "guilt" of his sin had been forgiven. And the death of his son was not the only punishment inflicted on him, for, shortly after another of his sons abused his own sister, and that son was, in return, murdered by his brother; and that brother afterwards rose up in rebellion against his father, forced him to fly to the wilderness for safety, and taking his father's wives, abused them before the whole people.

2. These "temporary punishments" serve us for our correction, for it is our greatest misfortune that we have not that just notion of sin that we should. We think too lightly of it, and if we had nothing to suffer in this world we would be apt to lose all horror of it, and consequently would take no care to avoid it. But when God requires that we should do penance or suffer "temporary punishments" for sin, this opens our eyes, lets us see that there is something more dreadful in sin than we imagined, puts us in mind of what we have to expect in the next life—since a good and just God requires sin to be so strictly punished here—and therefore makes us more cautious and careful to avoid it in future, keeps us away from what may be to us an occasion of sin, makes us more watchful, and "deters us from relapsing into it." As a man who, through neglect or extravagance, has incurred a very great debt, but which is remitted on the condition of substituting for it incessant toil and hard labour, attends more regularly to his business than before, and works a great deal harder than if no such condition was required; so, too, the penances or "temporary punishment" imposed upon us after the "guilt" of sin had been remitted, will make us more

careful in future to avoid sin and "deter us from relapsing" or falling again into those crimes of which we had been guilty before.

3. God requires at our hands "temporary punishment" for the sins we have committed, "that some atonement may be made to His offended justice and goodness;" for it is only just that we should suffer something painful on account of our ingratitude to God in violating the promises we had made Him in Baptism. It is just that God should require from us—for it is due to His offended justice—that we should suffer something in this life, as a substitute for the "eternal punishment" in the next, that we deserved by committing mortal sin. For, with regard to justice, it must be observed, that when we are first received into the favour of God by Baptism, we are treated with the greatest mercy, as all that He requires of us, to entitle us to this great mercy, is to believe in Jesus Christ, to promise to be faithful to Him for the future, and if we be adults, to be sorry for having offended Him. Even this faith and promise He does not actually require from ourselves when we are baptized in our infancy, but is content with the promise made in our name by our godfathers and godmothers.

4. Now, if, notwithstanding all this goodness, we should afterwards return to sin, and break the solemn promises we made, our ingratitude and malice would be such as to deserve the severest punishment; and it would be unreasonable and even unjust, that we should be received again into the friendship of God, upon the same easy terms as before. Even among ourselves, we see that it is this that common sense dictates to us. If, on receiving any great injury, we should at once and cheerfully forgive our enemy, become heartily reconciled to him, and do him every good office in our power, without requiring any further satisfaction than that of his asking our pardon and promising amendment; yet if this person should repeat the same or other great

injuries, would we receive him into our friendship on the same easy terms? Hence, the great Council of Trent says: "The fruits of the sacrament of Penance are different from those of Baptism; for, by Baptism we put on Christ and become in Him altogether a new creature, receiving the full and entire remission of all our sins; but if we lose this happy state by sin, we can by no means acquire the same newness and integrity by the sacrament of Penance, without great weeping and labour on our part, the Divine justice so requiring it." (Sess. xiv., cap. 2.)

5. "Temporary punishment" for sin is most effectual in turning aside the anger of God, and satisfying His "offended justice and goodness." At all times the Church inculcated the necessity of suffering "temporal punishment," and in the early ages imposed on her sinful children very severe penances—so severe as to make the Christians of these days look on them with surprise and dismay, if not with incredulity! But the Church, who is guided by the Holy Ghost, and who is a tender mother, would not have imposed on her sinful children penances severer than what were required by God to make "some atonement to His offended justice and goodness." And if the satisfactory works which she now imposes on her children are light and easy, when compared with the penitential works imposed in the early ages, it is because we have not the fervor of the early Christians; and the Church, like a kind and tender mother, condescends to our weakness, and contents herself with recommending to us voluntary penances. And as full atonement for sin can be made in purgatory, if not made during life, she allows her erring children, though not without sorrow or regret, to select, if they please, the sufferings of purgatory, for the full atonement due to God's "offended justice and goodness."

Q. Can the souls in Purgatory be relieved by our prayers and other good works ?

A. Yes; being children of God, and still members of the Church, they share in the communion of saints; and the Scripture says: "It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." (2 Mac. xii. 46.

6. As "the souls in Purgatory" are "children of God," and as they continue "members of the Church," we can, "by our prayers, and other good works," shorten their sufferings, and even obtain their deliverance from that fiery prison. God, in His infinite goodness and mercy, has established a community of "prayers and other good works," between all the members of His Church—triumphant in heaven, militant on earth, and suffering in purgatory; and in consequence of that community or alliance between all the members of the Church, and which is called "the communion of saints," we can powerfully aid our suffering brethren in purgatory, solace them in their pains, break the bonds which hold them captive, and open for them the gates of heaven.

7. This our religion teaches us; for it has been the constant and universal doctrine of the Church, from the age of the Apostles to the present time, that the souls in Purgatory are relieved by the suffrages of the faithful, and that God applies to these souls, and turns to their account, the fasts, the alms, the communions, the practices of penance, and all the other good works which we perform, and offer up to Him, for them. "The Catholic Church," says the Council of Trent, "instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the Sacred Writings, and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught in sacred Councils, and very recently in this Œcumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls therein detained

are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar." (Sess. 25.)

8. "The dead," says St. Chrysostom, "may be helped by prayers, and alms, and offerings; because they were not instituted in vain; let us, therefore, *help them*. It may happen that we may obtain a TOTAL PARDON for them by prayers, by oblations, by the saints who are named with them." (*Hom.* 41, *in Epist. ad Corinth.*) St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes thus: "Lastly, we pray for all that die amongst us, thinking it to be the greatest help that can be to their souls to have the holy and dreadful Sacrifice of the Altar offered in supplication for them." (*Cat. Mystag.*) We also find St. Augustin writing in the same manner: "By the prayer of the Holy Church," says he, "and the wholesome Sacrifice and alms, it is not to be doubted but that the dead are assisted; so that God deals more mercifully with them than their sins deserved. For we have learned from our fathers that it had been the universal practice of the Church to pray and offer sacrifice for those who died in the communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ." "These are not, however," he adds, "beneficial to all the dead, but only to those that lived so before their death, that they might be a help to them after it."—*St. Aug.* Serm. xxxii. *de verbis Apost.*

9. The prayers, sacrifices, and other good works of the faithful upon earth are, then, of the greatest benefit to "the souls in Purgatory;" for they both ease their sufferings, and shorten their duration. In their situation they can do nothing for themselves, but suffer till they have paid the last farthing: "For," says the Holy Ghost, "neither *work* nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening" (Eccles. ix. 10), that is, in the regions below, in the state of the dead. But though "the souls in Purgatory" can do nothing of themselves to ease or shorten their sufferings; yet, such is God's goodness, that in

consideration of the union and charity which exist among the members of His Church, He is pleased to accept the "prayers and other good works" of the faithful upon earth, when offered up by them for the souls of the faithful departed.

Q. Is it, then, great charity to pray for the souls in purgatory?
A. Yes; the greatest charity, whether we consider what they suffer, who they are, or how easily they can be relieved by us.

10. We cannot, dear children, perform a greater act of charity than that of praying "for the souls in urgatory." These poor souls are enduring such dreadful torments, that had we but a passing view of them, our hearts would be affected, and our eyes would stream with tears. They are continually thirsting after the joys of heaven; they are ever longing for that happy moment that is to unite them to the Lord, and to associate them to the choirs of angels. They are bound with chains which they cannot break; they are burning in flames which they cannot extinguish; and from the midst of these scorching flames and waves of fire, they cry out to you for help, they beseech you to comfort them in their affliction, to succour them in their distress, to relieve them in their extreme necessity, and to release them from their long captivity. They are every moment sending forth sighs and moans, and entreating and imploring assistance from their friends. They cry out to us in the words made use of by the Church: *Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my brethren; for the hand of the Lord has touched me.*

11. And who are those who thus cry out to us in such plaintive words for help? Were we but allowed to look into this fiery prison, perhaps we would distinguish among the rest the voice of a tender father or a fond mother, a close relation or a bosom friend, suffering there for a number of years on our account, and destitute of a friend on earth to stretch forth a charitable

hand to afford them relief. There are, perhaps, this very moment, many such helpless and friendless objects lying on a bed of fire in the midst of purgatory, and earnestly and piteously crying out to us to assist them in their great necessities, to comfort them in their sufferings, to bestow on them a spiritual alms, that they may be delivered from their torments, and released from the debts on account of which they are detained in prison.

12. They can easily be relieved by us, for we have it in our power to procure their liberty on easy terms. We may rescue them from the devouring flames by applying to them the benefit of the indulgences which we gain, by offering for their repose a part of our prayers and penitential works, by giving to the poor a little alms for their delivery, and by procuring for them the application of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; for, as we before said, alms-deeds, fasts, prayers, sacrifices, indulgences, offered to God for the faithful departed, are most effectual means to discharge them from the debts which they have contracted. Offering up our holy Communion is, too, a most effectual means of assisting our suffering brethren in purgatory; for when, dear children, you communicate, you perform an action most agreeable to Jesus Christ, who unceasingly invites you to this sacred banquet. When God is reposing in your breast, your prayers and supplications to Him for the repose of the souls of those in whom you are interested, will be favourably received by Him. Can He refuse solacing and delivering those for whom you pray, when they are recommended to Him under such favourable circumstances?

Q. Is it very profitable to ourselves to pray for the souls in purgatory?

A. Yes; it is one of the most profitable acts of mercy we can perform.

13. To procure relief for those who are gone before

us, and are now in a state of purgation and suffering in the other life, is the most effectual means to move the Almighty God to incite others to bring the same relief to us, if we ever be so happy as to go to the same place; for our Lord says: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy." "The souls in purgatory" are still the beloved spouses of Jesus Christ, united to Him by grace, and secure of their eternal salvation. Now if Christ assures us that a cup of cold water given in this life to any one, shall not be without its reward, what reward shall He give to those who so benefit his beloved spouses in purgatory, as to ease their dreadful torments, and procure them admittance into heaven! "It is," says the Scripture, "a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." Those holy souls themselves will sooner or later be admitted to the possession of God, to the clear and full enjoyment of the divine presence; and what a happiness will it be to us, dear children, if by our prayers, alms, sacrifices, and other good works, we shall have obtained their release from prison, and procured a speedy admission for them into heaven!

14. By contributing to hasten their enjoyment of bliss, we shall not only be the means of sending their souls into glory, but we shall likewise make friends for ourselves in the court of heaven, for the souls delivered by our prayers will not forget our services, but will repay with gratitude our kindness. They shall never forget our charity; but like so many powerful advocates and intercessors, they will pray for us in return, and employ their interest with the Lord in our behalf. On the contrary, if we be now insensible to their wants, and deaf to their cries, we may remain helpless and friendless after life: "Judgment without mercy to him that shows no mercy," says St James. If we now forget the suffering souls in purgatory, God, perhaps, will permit

us, likewise, to be forgotten, if we shall have to suffer in that place of punishment.

Q. Will there be always a purgatory?
A. No; purgatory will exist only to the end of the world.

15. It is certain that there will be a purgatory until the end of the world, but that it shall not exist longer. St. Augustin says so in the most positive manner: "Who," he says, "can for a moment think that the pains of purgatory will extend beyond the day of final judgment?" Origen, in one of his works, maintains that purgatory will be in existence after the general judgment; but this opinion has been always considered false and groundless.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

MALACHY AND HIS SISTER.

St. Bernard, in his life of St. Malachy, relates a fact which clearly proves the great efficacy of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass in relieving the souls suffering in purgatory. St. Malachy had a sister who, after spending a life rather worldly, died. For a long time after her death, he recommended her soul to God when celebrating the Holy Sacrifice. Having ceased making a remembrance of her, he was one night admonished in a dream, that his sister, in a distressed state, was awaiting him outside in the cemetery, and that she was thirty days without food. The saint at once understood the nature of the food required by her; for on counting over the days which passed since he omitted a remembrance of her in the Sacrifice of the Mass, he found that the number was just thirty. On the following morning he recommenced praying for his sister; and after some time he thought he saw her at the gate of the church, but unable to enter it. Still praying for her, he saw her within the very church, but at some distance from the altar. At last his perseverance was crowned by the object of his desires. At the expiration of a few days, when he was standing at the altar, she appeared to him with a joyful countenance in company with many other blessed spirits; and from this vision he knew that she was admitted into heaven, and that she was now in the enjoyment of the glory of the saints.

ST. MONICA'S REQUEST.

St. Monica, when dying, thus addressed both her sons, Augustin and Navigius, who were standing by her bed: "Be not uneasy about my body, for it is of little consequence where it is to be interred; the only request that I make is, that you should remember me at the altar of God, wherever you will be."

After the holy death of his mother, St. Augustin was careful to comply with her dying request. He offered up fervent prayers for the repose of her soul, and procured the prayers of others for the same intention. Nothing can be more touching, or more calculated to inspire us with a salutary fear of the rigours of God's justice, than the pious tears and the fervent supplications he addressed to the Lord for the eternal rest of the soul of his holy mother, and that at a time when there was every reason to believe that she had been long since in the enjoyment of the rewards of the saints. Here are the words: "The tears which I to-day shed for my mother, O my God! are very different from those shed through grief for having lost her. They flow from the dread with which I am seized, when I consider how much reason we have to fear for all those who die after having been made partakers of the sin of Adam; for although my mother had been vivified in Jesus Christ, and although, during her stay on this earth, her morals had been so pure, and her faith so lively, as to afford a subject for blessing your holy name, yet I cannot be assured that she had not committed some act which may be a violation of your sacred law. Unhappy are even those who have spent most regular lives, if you come to judge them without mercy. For the sins of my mother I pour forth my prayers to you; pardon, O Lord! whatever sins she may have committed against you. Enter not into judgment with her, for you have promised to be merciful to those who show mercy."—*Godescard.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Can you prove from Scripture that a temporary punishment is due to sin after the guilt has been forgiven?
2. Why is temporary punishment inflicted for sin?
3. Is temporary punishment required to atone for sin?
4. Do justice and reason require the suffering of temporary punishment for sin?
5. Has the Church always insisted on the necessity of undergoing temporary punishment for sin?
6. How can the souls in purgatory receive aid from us?

7. Has it been always the doctrine of the Church that we can assist the souls in purgatory?
8. What do the holy Fathers say about sacrifices and prayers for the dead?
9. Can the souls in purgatory assist themselves?
10. What are the sufferings of the souls in purgatory?
11. Who are those souls that are tormented in purgatory?
12. Can we easily assist the suffering souls in purgatory?
13. Shall we obtain a great reward for praying for the souls in purgatory?
14. Will the souls released from purgatory pray in turn for us?
15. Will purgatory last for ever.

PRACTICE.

1. Often think of the severity of God's judgments on sin, that you may more willingly do penance for your past transgressions.
2. Consider frequently the suffering state of the souls in purgatory, that you may pour forth your prayers for them.
3. Whenever you pass a churchyard, or cemetery, recite a Pater and Ave for all deceased souls.

PRAYER.

O Father of mercies and God of all consolations! inspire us with sentiments of charity and compassion for our distressed brethren suffering in purgatory. O Jesus! have pity, we beseech Thee, on the souls of the faithful departed. Admit them, we pray Thee, into Thy heavenly kingdom, and let them at once enjoy the glory of the choir of heaven. Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord! and let perpetual light shine upon them. Amen.

CHAPTER X.

ON SPIRITS AND VAMPIRES.

Q. Can those who have died return from the other world, and appear again upon earth?

A. Yes; with the permission of God.

1. When the soul has left the body, and has been judged by God, it at once enters heaven, hell, or purgatory. But can it leave either of these places, at least for a short time, and return to this world, in order to warn its surviving friends, or any other persons? Or, in other words, can there be, or have there been, such things as "spirits" or spectres? It is certain that the belief in "spirits"—a belief spread far and wide—can be traced back to the earliest times. People of every nation, even the most barbarous and uncivilized, are or have been of opinion, that souls, after death, can return to this world, assume terrestrial or aerial forms, make noise, howl, and speak. In this there is nothing opposed to common sense, nothing surpassing the almighty power of God.

2. "When a soul has been separated from the body," says Bergier, "God can make it appear again in the world, give it the same body which it had before, or some other body, and endow it with the power of performing the very same functions it had performed before death. This is one of the most striking means which God could employ in instructing men and rendering them tractable." It is, then, absolutely possible that souls after death can again appear in the world.

Q. But in reality have any persons after death returned to this world?

A. Yes; there have been persons who have returned from the other world; and there is nothing to prevent a similar occurrence again.

3. That souls after death have returned to this world, we have no less an authority than the Sacred Writings. We are told in the Gospel, that Moses with Elias appeared on Mount Thabor at the time of our Lord's transfiguration; and that at the death of Christ, and after His resurrection, "many bodies of the saints that had slept arose; and coming out of the tombs, after His resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many." (Matt. xxvii. 52). In the Second Book of Machabees, we read that Jeremias, with the holy Pontiff Onias, appeared, though in a vision, to Judas Machabeus, and presented him with a sword of gold, saying: "Take this holy sword, a gift from God, wherewith thou shalt overthrow the adversaries of My people Israel" (2 Mach. xv. 16). We read, too, in the First Book of Kings, that the Prophet Samuel appeared after death to the Witch of Endor, and that he prophesied and foretold to Saul the evils which were soon to befall him.

4. St. Thomas unhesitatingly says, that Samuel appeared in person: and St. Augustin thus speaks in his *Questions to Simplicius*: "It is not absurd to believe that God permitted the prophet to appear to the king, that he might inspire him with a salutary fear." The same holy doctor, in his letter to Evodius, bishop, makes mention of a young man who appeared to a great many persons after his death; and by that means, he adds, God permitted that they should be confirmed in the opinion which they had of his sanctity. Eusebius, St. Paulinus, Origen, Sulpicius, Severus, Theodoret, St. Gregory the Great, and other writers, recount in their works many instances of persons who returned after death to this world. In the life of St. Bruno, there is an account given of a doctor of Paris, who appeared on the third day after his death, and related how he had been accused, judged, and condemned to the most excruciating tortures; and the description which

he gave of what happened to him, was such as to make all who heard him shudder, There have been, therefore, and may be still, instances of persons appearing again in this world after death.

Q. Are we, then, to believe all the stories current about spirits?
A. No; because nearly all these stories are groundless, and cannot stand the test of examination.

5. Although there may be, and in reality have been, well-authenticated accounts of persons who have returned from the other world, and have been seen again on earth, we must not, however, conclude that all the stories that we hear told at the fire-side, by night, or at *wakes* and meetings, about spectres and ghosts, are true. Of a thousand stories of this sort, there is not one that turns out to be true; and even apparitions, of the reality of which there is scarcely a doubt entertained, can be explained, in almost every case, in a natural way.

6. What a great number of stories do we hear about spirits, which, when closely examined, have turned out to be purely the result of deception, skill, and artifice. At one time we find that the pretended ghost, of which we heard so much, was no other than a young man of the neighbourhood, who, that he might, without being discovered, keep up an illicit familiarity with a female in the house, so disguised himself as to be thought "a spirit." At another time, the "spirit" spoken of as making its appearance in a certain house, and there uttering unearthly sounds, and making fearful noises, turns out, on a close examination, to be no less a personage than a noted thief, who, to secure himself from detection, had recourse to those means of imposing on the credulity of those living in the house. Again, the report that a certain house is *haunted* has gained ground, and not one can be induced to live in a place where it is believed spirits

are roaming about at night, and turning everything upside down; but in a few months it transpires that all this had been effected by one who had lately been ejected from the dwelling, and wanted to prevent others from taking it.

7. There are, too, a great number of apparitions, which, though supposed real, can be traced to fear, or to an excited imagination; as, for example, something white is seen at night standing against a hedge, at the end of a narrow road, and it is no sooner seen than it disappears in some unaccountable way. A report immediately gets abroad that it was a "spirit," as, at the time it was seen, plaintive cries were heard. But, in reality, the spirit was no other than a frightened poor beast!

8. A gentleman was benighted, not long since, in a remote part of the highlands of Scotland, and was compelled to ask shelter for the evening at a small lonely hut. When he was to be conducted to his bedroom, the landlady observed, with a mysterious air, that he would find the window very insecure. On examination, part of the wall appeared to have been broken down to enlarge the opening. After some inquiry he was told that a pedlar, who had lodged in the room a short time before had committed suicide, and was found hanging behind the door in the morning. According to the superstition of the country, it was deemed improper to remove the body through the door of the house, and to convey it through the window part of the wall was removed. Some hints were dropped that the room had been subsequently haunted by the poor man's spirit. The gentleman retired to rest rather uneasy; and, to protect himself, laid his fire-arms by the bed-side. He was visited in a dream by a frightful apparition, and awaking in agony, found himself sitting up, with a pistol grasped in his right hand. On casting a fearful glance around the room, he discovered, by the moonlight,

a corpse dressed in a shroud, reared erect against the wall close by the window. With much difficulty he summoned up resolution to approach the dismal object, the features of which, and the minutest part of its funeral shroud, he perceived distinctly. He passed one hand over it, felt nothing, and staggered back to bed. After some time, and much reasoning with himself, he renewed his investigation, and at length discovered that the object of his terror was produced by the moonbeams, forming a long bright image through the broken window, on which his fancy, excited by his dream, had pictured, with mischievous accuracy, the form of a body prepared for interment.

9. The appearance of spectres and phantoms can be very often traced to a mind ill at ease, and to a conscience torn with remorse. Persons guilty of enormous and unnatural crimes, who have during life, for example, ill-treated their parents, relatives, or friends, to such an extent as to be the cause of their death, or have been guilty of seducing from the paths of virtue many young and innocent souls, are peculiarly predisposed for seeing spirits. Conscience speaks to them of guilt —its voice cannot be hushed. They cannot rest night or day, owing to the remembrance of what they have done. The victims of their crime present themselves to their minds continually. They tremble, they shudder, at the vivid picture before their eyes. Their imagination becomes so heated, that, in the darkness of night, they think they clearly see frightful apparitions, reproaching and threatening them for their evil deeds— that their fathers are before them on the way cursing them, and their wives upbraiding them with terrible imprecations.

10. Apparitions or ghosts can be very often traced to a gloomy and melancholy turn of mind; and it is worthy of remark, that ghosts were never so numerous in England as during some years after the civil war in 1649.

The gloomy tendency of the rigid Puritans of that period, their possession of the old family seats, formerly the residence of hospitality and good cheer, but in their hands dismal, dark, and desolate, and the fearfully thrilling stories circulated far and wide by the old retainers to these ancient establishments, after they had been dismissed, contributed altogether to produce a wide-spread terror, unknown in other periods of the history of the country.

11. The little that we have said on this subject will probably explain all the wonderful things that have been said about ghosts and spirits. As we said before, so we now say, that the existence of what we call "spirits" is possible, for God is all-powerful, and the soul is immortal. Because persons have been deceived in a thousand cases of apparitions, it does not follow that in no case can it be proved that a soul has appeared again in this world after death. On this subject we should incline neither to too great credulity, or to absolute unbelief, but hold a middle course. Nearly all the accounts that have appeared of "spirits," says Salgues, in his book on *Popular Errors and Prejudices*, "are formed of puerilities." Ears pulled, bed-clothes removed, tables upset, candles extinguished, vessels broken, curtains drawn aside, chairs displaced, and the like, form the burden of stories about ghosts.

Q. What are vampires that we hear spoken of sometimes?

A. Vampires, if we are to believe certain credulous writers, are men who, though dead for some time, arise from their graves, and go to suck the blood of the living.

12. "Vampire" means a bloodsucker, and is said to be a man who returns in body and soul from the other world, and wanders about the earth doing every kind of mischief to the living, generally by sucking their blood when asleep, and thus causing their death. Those who are destroyed in this way, we are

told, become themselves vampires. The only way, it is said, of getting rid of such revolting visitors, is, according to Dom Calmet,* to disinter their bodies, to pierce them with a stake cut from a green tree, to cut off their heads, and burn their bodies. The belief in "vampires" has prevailed for many ages in Hungary, Bohemia, Austria, Greece, and all through the East. Of all those countries Hungary may be considered as the principal seat of "vampires," and scarcely a century has elapsed since all Europe was filled with reports about the deeds of vampires in Hungary and Servia. The belief became so general in those countries, in the middle of the eighteenth century, that Louis XV. of France commissioned the Duc de Richelieu, his ambassador at Vienna, personally to ascertain in Hungary the reality of vampireism.

13. In some Hungarian papers, the manners and customs of those vampires are described; as, for instance, that when lying in their graves they suck and chew their winding-sheets, and that, therefore, it was necessary to bind their hands, that they might not be able to turn about in their coffins. Many believe that "vampires," notwithstanding all the means used to destroy their bodies, will resume their shape, and recommence their mischievous wanderings as soon as the rays of moonlight fall on their graves. Innumerable stories, more or less wonderful, have been circulated in reference to vampireism; yet, despite the apparent evidence of certain facts, there are very few persons, now-a-days, who attach the slightest importance to the accounts circulated about "vampires."

14. "Whatever has been related of their return to life," says Dom Calmet, "of their appearances, of the alarm and dread which they cause in town and country, and of the death which they inflict by sucking the blood

* *Dissertation sur les Vampires.*

of the living—all this is but a delusion, and the result of an overheated imagination, and of a mind strongly prejudiced. No sane, serious, unprejudiced witness can be cited, who can say that he either saw, touched, felt, questioned, or examined such spirits, or who could assure us of the reality of their return to life, and of the effects which are generally attributed to them."* It is very likely that the superstition about the vampire has derived considerable strength from cases where men, supposed to be dead, have been buried alive. Such cases have happened in many countries, as has been shown by the altered position of the body in the coffin, spots of blood on the torn winding-sheets, bites on the hands, and other marks of the trouble and despair before life became extinct; and it is probable that such signs have been sometimes interpreted as the marks of vampireism.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

NICOLAI OF BERLIN.

The case of Nicolai, the celebrated bookseller of Berlin, affords a curious illustration of the long continuance of vivid spectral illusions, without the slightest belief on his part of the real existence of these apparitions. "In a state of mind completely sound, and after the first terror was over, with perfect calmness," says this remarkable man, "I saw, for nearly two months, almost constantly, a vast number of human and other forms, and even heard their voices. . . . My wife and another person came into my apartment in the morning, in order to console me, but I was too much agitated by a series of incidents that had most powerfully affected my feelings to be capable of attending to them. On a sudden I perceived, at about the distance of ten steps, a form like that of a deceased person. I pointed at it, asking my wife if she did not see it? It was natural that she should not see anything. My question, therefore, alarmed her very much, and she immediately sent for a physician. The physician ascribed the apparition to a violent mental emotion, and hoped there would be

* *On the Apparition of Spirits.*

no return. At four in the afternoon the form which I had seen in the morning re-appeared. I was by myself when this happened, and being rather uneasy at the incident, went to my wife's apartment, but there, likewise, I was persecuted by the apparition, which, however, at intervals disappeared, and always presented itself in a standing posture. About six o'clock, there appeared, also, several walking figures, which had no connexion with the first. . . . .

"These phantasms seemed equally clear and distinct at all times, and under all circumstances, both when I was by myself, and when I was in company, and as well in the day as at night, and in my own house as well as abroad. I also began to hear them talk; they sometimes conversed among themselves, but more frequently addressed their discourse to me, and their speeches were generally short."

DOCTOR BAYLE AND THE GHOST.

One night in December, at the approach of Christmas, Doctor Bayle was whiling away a few hours with some of the villagers of Vernet, in the south of France; and in the course of conversation the subject of *spirits* was introduced, and each one had something marvellous to tell. The Doctor began to laugh at the wonderful stories that were told, and said that such things proceeded from prejudice and an excited imagination. "Do you mean to say," replied an old woman, who was spinning in the corner of the kitchen, "that on this night, the eve of Christmas, you would not be afraid to enter the church by yourself, and walk there alone, and without light?" "Yes, my good woman," said the Doctor, "I would go and walk the church without being in the least alarmed. This very instant I will enter it; and lest you may disbelieve me, I will bring back from the church something belonging to it; and just tell me what you wish that should be?" "Here is the key of the church," said the sexton, who was present, and added he in a half sly, half artless manner, "when you have opened the door, go up straight to the principal altar, and behind it, in a crevice, you will find a *death's head*—a death's head, they say, never frightens a doctor—and if you bring it back from the church, it will be a sure sign that you have been there." "The death's head I will certainly bring back," replied the Doctor; and arising at once from his chair, he proceeded to the church. Having entered it, he found no difficulty in making out the crevice alluded to. He inserted his hands into the opening, drew forth the skull, and laid hold of it with both hands; and no sooner had he done so, than he thought he heard a sad and mournful cry, but attributed it to a grating sound made by the bones coming in contact with a

stone. When he had gained the centre of the church, another cry, more distinct and mournful than the first, was again heard by him. "It must be the screech of an owl," said the Doctor to himself, and he moved on. In order to close the gate, on leaving the church, he laid the skull on the floor, and when he had turned the key in the keyhole, he stooped down to take it up. Scarcely had he done so, when he heard the very same cry as before. He was not a little surprised at the circumstance, but said he, "It cannot surely proceed from this lifeless head? but from what does it proceed?" Scarcely had he asked himself the question, when two sounds were heard at one and the same time; and now no doubt could any longer exist that these cries proceeded from the *death's head!* "But again," said he, "it is impossible that sounds can be emitted without the organs of voice; and in this skull there are surely no organs capable of articulating a single sound." But all his philosophy again gave way, for the same mournful cries were now repeated in quick succession, and every doubt of their proceeding from the skull was this time at an end. The Doctor became alarmed; perspiration burst from his forehead, and trickled down his cheeks; his limbs tottered, and could scarcely support his body; he appeared as if fixed to the ground and unable to move a step. At last he appears at the door of the cottage; the door is opened, and the villagers are there awaiting him. He enters, and, oh! such a look! All those assembled in the kitchen start to their feet at once, so pale was his look, and such indications of alarm did his countenance present. When he arrived in the centre of the room, he laid the death's head on the floor, and at the very moment two cries are heard, and the Doctor falls off in a faint. All those around run away shrieking with alarm; the old sexton was the only person that remained behind. He went over to the Doctor, and soon succeeded in recovering him from his swoon. His first exclamation on getting up was "The head?" "Here it is, sir," was the reply. "Have you heard that noise?" "Certainly." "What! has it then proceeded from the skull?" whispered the Doctor, in tones of alarm. "Very likely, as there may be a bat's nest in it, as there has been every season these many years past," replied the old sexton. Doctor Bayle himself called back the affrighted villagers, took the skull between his hands, and inserting his fingers into a small opening in the back of the skull, drew forth some pieces of tow and old linen. It was a nest of a pair of young bats, who at once made their appearance, but being too weak to fly, fell on the ground clapping their little wings. "See the spirit!" exclaimed Doctor Bayle; "now look at it! Yet even I myself was for a time shamefully alarmed!"—*A historical fact.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Does the belief in spirits prevail much?
2. What is the opinion of Bergier in reference to spirits?
3. Have we any authority in Scripture in support of the belief in spirits?
4. What do the holy Fathers say in reference to spirits?
5. Are we to believe all the stories that we hear about spirits?
6. Mention some cases which prove that stories about spirits have no foundation.
7. Are there many apparitions that can be traced to fear?
8. Mention the circumstances connected with a gentleman who was benighted.
9. Are ghosts or spirits the effect of a remorseful conscience?
10. Can a belief in ghosts be traced to a gloomy disposition?
11. From the great number of spectral illusions, are we to infer the impossibility of spirits?
12. What is meant by a vampire?
13. What description is given of the customs of the vampires?
14. What is the opinion of Dom Calmet in reference to vampires?

PRACTICE.

1. Always endeavour to be in peace with God, and you need not fear any disturbance from ghosts or spirits.
2. If anything calculated to alarm you makes its appearance at night, think at once that the eye of God is watching you, and that your guardian angel is present to protect you.

PRAYER.

O God! we know that Thou hast always a care of us, and that, shielded by Thee, we need not fear as long as we refrain from sin, and preserve peace with Thee and with ourselves. We have no reason to apprehend danger from spirits or phantoms, because without Thy permission we know nothing can injure us, or any harm befall us. Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

Q. What means the Communion of Saints?

A. It means that all who belong to the true Church; by their prayers and good works, assist each other.

1. The faithful, of which the Church is composed, form all together but one and the same body, of which Jesus Christ is the head. From the strict union existing among all its members, there arises a communication of *spiritual* goods, or of such good things as relate to our salvation: that is to say, that these *spiritual* goods are common to all the members of the Church, and that each has a right to participate in what belongs equally to all. This is what is meant by the "Communion of Saints." The word *communion* means a common union, by which good things are mutually communicated to each other by all its members, and the "Communion of Saints" signifies a mutual communication of *spiritual* goods, or of things which relate to our salvation. As, whatever each member of a large family gains by his industry and labour, is placed in a common fund, and becomes the property of all; so, too, whatever grace or favour each member of the Church receives, and whatever good work he performs, is a part of all the graces and good works of the others; and so, common to all. This communication of spiritual goods is confined to members of the true Church; for infidels, Jews, apostates, heretics, schismatics, and all those who are cut off from the Church, can have no part in its spiritual treasures.

Q. What do you mean by the spiritual goods, which are mutually communicated by the members of the Church?

A. I mean by these spiritual goods, the sacraments, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the prayers, the good works, and merits of all the faithful.

2. The spiritual goods which are common to all the members of the Church are:—1. "The sacraments," in which each member of the Church *militant* has a right to participate, and draw therefrom holiness and justice. 2. "The holy Sacrifice of the Mass," which is every day offered for us, and which draws down on us the graces and favours of heaven. 3. "The prayers and good works of the faithful," for each member of the Church has a part in all her prayers, both public and private—the word *I* is unknown in the society of the faithful, for every one prays not only for himself or herself, but for all. In addressing our petitions to God, we do not say "my Father, but our Father." All the good works which are done in this world, wherever performed, of what kind soever, and by whomsoever done, we are made partakers of. 4. "The merits of all the faithful," in which we have a share; we are participators of all the graces which each has received, of all the goods of the Church in general, and of all the miracles and prophecies of her children, beginning with Jesus Christ, her head.

3. Of all "these spiritual goods" there is formed an inexhaustible treasure, which belongs to all the faithful. These spiritual blessings receive all their value from the merits of Jesus Christ; for it is by means of the sacraments and of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, that our divine Lord has transferred, communicated, and applied to the members of His Church all that He has merited by His passion and death. As, then, dear children, we can mutually assist each other, let our prayers be offered up, both in church and at home, for each other. Let us pray for our parents, for our friends, for even our

enemies; for they are our brethren in virtue of "the communion of saints." Let us frequently raise our voices up to heaven, and unite our prayers with the prayers of the saints, for the necessities of each other.

Q. Is the communion of saints confined to the faithful who live in this world?

A. No; it includes the Church triumphant, the Church suffering, and the Church militant.

4. The Church of Christ, taken in its most extensive signification, consists of all those who belong to Him by faith—of the posterity of Adam—wherever they are, and in whatever state or condition they be. The members of this Church are divided into three classes. The first contains all those who belong to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolical Church here upon earth; and this portion of the Church in general is called the *Church militant;* so called because her members are still in the field of battle, fighting against the enemies of their souls, and labouring to secure their eternal happiness.

5. The second class contains all those souls who are suffering in purgatory the punishment due to sin, and is called "the Church suffering," because its members are continually sighing for the happy moment which is to unite them for ever with "the Church triumphant." From the depths of the prison in which that Church groans and sighs, it beholds heaven, where it shall one day be received, but which is now closed against it. It has a glimpse of the majesty of God; it is continually tending towards Him, and desirous of flying into His bosom, but God repels it, and allows it to pine in the midst of torments. This is the idea that we should have of "the Church suffering."

6. The third class contains all those who, having departed out of this life in perfect purity, and having fully satisfied what they owed to the divine justice, are immediately admitted to the enjoyment of God in heaven,

in company with His holy angels, or have been received into that happy state, after being sufficiently purified in purgatory. These compose what is called "the Church triumphant;" because, after having fought manfully, and conquered all the enemies of their souls, they are now saints of God, triumphing in heaven, in the possession of eternal glory. God Himself is become their recompense; they possess Him with all His perfections; their hearts are filled with Him. They are inebriated with the abundance of the good things which they enjoy in the house of the Lord; they swim in a river of pleasure, and are drowned, as it were, in a flood of delights. Such, dear children, is the nature of "the Church triumphant."

7. These three different classes of the Church at large, namely, "the Church militant, the Church suffering, the Church triumphant," form, all together, but one and the same society, one and the same people, one and the same Church; for all its members, whether they are still battling in this world, reigning in heaven with Jesus Christ, or suffering in purgatory, are united together by mutual relations, and indissoluble ties. They all obey the same head, which is Jesus Christ; they are animated with the same spirit, which is Jesus Christ; they are destined for the same happiness, which is that of seeing God, and possessing Him for ever.

Q. What is the nature of the communion between the faithful on earth and the saints in heaven?

A. It consists in the faithful on earth praying to the saints, and in the saints praying for the faithful.

8. "The saints in heaven" take a lively interest in everything which concerns us; they pray for us, and by their influence with Jesus Christ, whose friends they are, they obtain for us the graces necessary to salvation. "The saints in heaven" are already perfectly happy; and, secure of their own salvation, they have nothing more to desire, nothing more to ask; yet the Scripture

tells us that they, pray and often pray. But for whom? They pray for us, dear children, who are still tossed about in the angry sea of this world, every moment in danger of perishing under its stormy billows. They pray that we may escape the shipwreck with which we are threatened; they pray to Jesus Christ that He may bring us safe to the haven of salvation, and that He may crown us with everlasting glory, as He has already crowned themselves. Knowing the great number, strength, and artifice of our enemies, they pray that we should not become their victims, but that we may triumph over them, and finally vanquish them. The saints reigning in heaven with Jesus Christ are secure of their own salvation, and are solicitous only about our happiness. They take a lively interest in us, and render us every assistance, that we may one day arrive at that happiness which they now enjoy. This is what the saints in heaven do for us.

9. On our side, our communion with them consists in our praising God for the happiness they enjoy; in paying them that honour and veneration which is due to their dignity as friends of God; in recalling to our minds the virtues they practised while on earth; in proposing them to ourselves as models, that we may endeavour to imitate them; and in venerating them as the co-heirs of Jesus Christ, and as the temples of the Holy Ghost. In fine, we look up to them as powerful advocates, who are never invoked in vain; as zealous defenders, who always wage war against all our enemies. We beg a share in their holy prayers, as the friends and favourites of God, for we know that our prayers are offered to God by them.

Q. In what consists the communion which exists between the faithful on earth and the souls in purgatory?

A. It consists in our offering up our prayers, our good works, and, in particular, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the souls in purgatory.

10. As we are assisted here below by the saints in heaven, we, on our side, assist the souls in purgatory, who, as long as they are in their suffering state, can do nothing for themselves. We offer to God for these poor souls, prayers, alms, and, in particular, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, with a firm belief that they can be assisted and consoled by these means. "The souls in purgatory," on their side, are not forgetful of us still battling on this earth, for from the depth of their fiery prison they address fervent prayers and supplications to the Lord for us. Such, at least, is the opinion of the most celebrated divines; and we are told that in more instances than one, favours have been granted by God which had been asked through the intercession of "the souls in purgatory."

Q. In what consists the communion of the faithful among themselves?

A. In this: that the graces received by each, and the good works performed by each, are profitable to all.

11. In the Church militant, each of the faithful has a part in all the prayers which are offered by all its members, in all the virtues which are practised, in all the graces which are received, in all the merits which are acquired by them, and in all the talents, great qualities, and glorious actions of all her children. In all the blessings and advantages which the Church enjoys, we have a part; for all the favours and privileges of the Church are common to all her children. The harmony existing in the Church is such, that whatever is done by one single member is done not for himself merely; for in doing it he contributes to the good of all the others, to the good of the entire body, and of each member in particular. The abundance of one supplies, by this means, the weakness of another; the good and pious fast and pray, not only for themselves, but for sinners; the alms of the rich are of service to those who themselves are unable to bestow any; the severe penances and great

austerities of ardent souls are of utility to those who cannot practise such painful works themselves.

12. Not a good example that is given—not an advice that is offered—not a word of instruction that is conveyed by a pastor, that does not redound to the good of every member of the Church. The Sacrifice of the Mass, which is offered by any Priest, in any particular place, in any part of the world, is useful to all, because it is offered for all; for the Church, by the hands of her Minister, offers up for all the Victim that was sacrificed for all. Oh, how many are the advantages we possess in being members of the Church! Not a good thought, word, or deed, of any single member, that the rest cannot lay claim to! How we should, then, rejoice and feel happy at the goodness and piety of others! Let us, then, dear children, endeavour to contribute to this common treasure by performing good works; for it is just that he who wishes to derive benefit from a common treasure, should make every exertion to contribute something to the support of it.

Q. Why are the faithful called saints?

A. Because they have been sanctified by Baptism, and because they are called to sanctity.

13. Although there are in the Church a great many sinners, yet the faithful of which it consists are called saints—1. Because, since the Church was founded by Jesus Christ, all its members have been sanctified by baptism. 2. Because, as long as they persevere in grace—or when, having lost it by sin, they recover it by penance—they are saints. 3. Because they are always called to a holy life, and ought, in order to correspond with the designs of God, walk in the way of justice and perfection, that they may enjoy one day the glory and happiness of the saints. It is for this reason that St. Paul, when speaking or writing to the faithful of his time, called them saints.

ST. ALBERT'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

Q. Who are those on earth who have no part in the communion of saints?

A. All those who belong not to the true Church.

14. In order that a branch should receive sap from the root of the tree, it must be united to the trunk. So, too, in order to have a part in "the communion of saints," it is necessary that we be united to the Church. For this reason, infidels, Jews, heretics, schismatics, and all persons excommunicated, have no part in the communion of saints. Infidels and Jews have no part in "the communion of saints," because they never belonged to the Church—the former being pagans or idolaters, who adore not the true God, but adore creatures, such as the sun, the moon, men, animals, painted figures, idols—the latter, because they refuse to believe in Jesus Christ, do not acknowledge Him to be the Son of God, the Messias foretold by the Prophets, but continue blind, hardened, obstinate in their unbelief; and in consequence of their ancestors having put our Lord to death, are scattered over the surface of the globe, without country, without king, without sacrifice, bearing wherever they go the mark of reprobation, as Jesus Christ Himself foretold.

15. "Heretics" are deprived of the communion of saints, because they have separated from the Church, and obstinately continue attached to erroneous doctrines which the Church has condemned. For example, Luther and Calvin, with their followers, deny the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, reject the sacraments of Confirmation, Penance, Extreme Unction, Matrimony, and profess many other errors. "Schismatics" have also no part in "the communion of saints," because they have been guilty of *schism*, or a separation from the holy Roman Catholic Church. They will not recognise the Pope as head of the Church, nor will they obey his authority, nor that of the other legitimate Pastors. They form a society of their own, apart from

the society of the Church; and on that account they are rejected from her bosom, and are deprived of "the communion of saints."

16. "Excommunicated" persons are another class who enjoy not the advantages of "the communion of saints," for although Christians and children of the Church, they remain deprived of her spiritual blessings until they shall correct the grievous faults for which they have been excommunicated. The Church excludes them from being present at the holy Sacrifice; she deprives them of the holy Eucharist, of other sacraments, of public prayers, even of Christian burial, if they continue obstinate until death. The excommunicated are, too, deprived of the advantages of the society of the faithful as long as they remain bound by the censure of excommunication. The Church will not allow of their holding companionship with her faithful children, for they are rotten branches, isolated, proscribed with ignominy, loaded with disgrace, and held aloof like those infected with leprosy.

Q. Have sinners who are not out of the Church a part in its spiritual blessings?

A. Yes; such sinners have a part in the spiritual blessings of the Church.

17. Sinners who are not cut off from the bosom of the Church by excommunication, are not excluded from the communion of saints, for though they are dead and rotten members, they still continue united to the Church. They belong to the Church, but as the unnatural and ungrateful children of a tender and loving mother. This loving mother, despite their ingratitude and their disloyalty, still preserves for them tenderness and affection; and if, on account of their sins, they are deprived of spiritual blessings, such as sanctifying grace, and the benefits of indulgences, which cannot be enjoyed except by just souls, yet they have a part in those *ineffable*

groanings mentioned by St. Paul, which are continually sent up towards Heaven, not only for the just, that they may persevere in grace, but also for sinners, that they may be *converted* and live.

18. The Sacrifice of the Mass is offered up for them as well as for the most fervent Christians; the saints reigning in heaven cease not to intercede in their favour with the Father of mercies, that they may recover the life of grace which they have lost by sin; and it only remains for them to have recourse to those means which Jesus Christ has instituted and intrusted to His Church for the remission of sins. "Weep and mourn," says St. Ambrose to those Christians who had the misfortune of falling into crime and sin; "and if your repentance be not enough to purify you, considering the grievousness of your faults, the Church, your mother, shall supply your want by her groans and prayers, and will, by her tears, restore you to life." Oh! how deplorable is the state of that soul which is in sin! It is deprived of the most precious gifts of the communion of saints!

19. Consider, then, dear children, how fatal is mortal sin to the soul, and how you should make every effort to cleanse yourselves from that vile stain, and live the life of a true Christian. From the truths just explained, you will see, in the first place, the necessity of praying fervently for all those who are out of the Church, that God may enlighten their understandings and touch their hearts; in the second place, the necessity of always rendering God thanks for the grace given you of belonging to that Church in which are found so many advantages; in the third place, the inutility to a Christian of belonging to the body of the Church, if he be not animated with the spirit of Jesus Christ; and in the fourth place, the shame we should feel at being so eager for earthly goods, and so remiss in labouring for spiritual blessings.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

ST. BERNARD ON THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

St. Bernard, in his panegyric of St. Victor of Arcis, says: "Now placed in heaven he beholds God clearly revealed to him, swallowed up in joy, but not forgetting us. It is not a land of oblivion in which Victor dwells. Heaven doth not harden or straiten hearts, but it maketh them more tender and compassionate; it doth not distract minds or alienate them from us; it doth not diminish, but it increaseth affection and charity, and augmenteth the bowels of pity. The angels, although they behold the face of their Father, visit, run, and continually assist us; and shall they now forget us, who were once among us, and who themselves once suffered what they see us at present labouring under? No; *I know the just expect me till thou renderest to me my reward.* Victor is not like that cup-bearer of Pharaoh, who could forget his fellow-captive. He hath not so put on the stole of glory himself as to lay aside his pity or the remembrance of our misery."

St. AUGUSTIN'S PRAYERS FOR INNOCENT.

St. Augustin, accompanied by some of his priests, paid a visit to a person of distinction, named Innocent, on hearing that he was sick. No sooner had St. Augustin entered the sick man's room, than he heard from him that on the following day he was to undergo a very painful operation, and that he greatly feared the consequences. He entreated the saint to be present during the operation, that in case he should sink under it, he might be assisted by his prayers and exhortations. St. Augustin promised to be in attendance, at the same time exhorting him to have recourse to God, to place confidence in His great mercy, to submit to His holy will, and to offer up his prayers in union with those which were now about to be offered up for him. St. Augustin and the attending priests then knelt down, and fervently prayed for the sick man, whose state touched them with pity. On the following day the surgeons were at the bedside of Innocent, and were about commencing the operation, when, on a close inspection of the part of the body affected, they found that every trace of the disease had disappeared. God had attended to the prayers of His servants.—*Of the City of God.*

ST. MONICA'S PRAYERS FOR HER SON.

St. Monica, mother of St. Augustin, the great doctor of the Church, was sorely afflicted at witnessing the impiety and dissolute

morals of her son. Bitter were the tears she shed day and night over his wanderings, and incessant were her prayers for his conversion. As she was one day giving an account to a holy bishop of the sorrow and uneasiness given her by her son's wicked course of life, and added that she doubted of ever effecting his conversion, the holy man consoled her by these words: "It is impossible that a child of such tears and so many prayers should perish." And so it came to pass; for her prayers were heard, and her son, great sinner though he was, became a great saint.

ST. CATHERINE OF BOLOGNA, AND THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

When St. Catherine of Bologna stood in need of any grace, she had recourse to the souls in purgatory, and her prayers were immediately heard. She declared that through these holy souls many favours were granted to her, which she had sought through the intercession of the saints, and had not obtained.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Do all the members of the Church participate in the prayers and good works of each?
2. What are these spiritual goods in which all the members of the Church have a part?
3. From what source do these spiritual goods receive all their value?
4. Into how many classes is the Church in general divided?
5. What do you mean by the Church suffering?
6. What do you understand by the Church triumphant?
7. In what way do these three classes of the Church form the same body?
8. In what way are we assisted by the saints in heaven?
9. In what way do we hold communion with the saints?
10. How do we hold communion with the souls in purgatory, and they with us?
11. Have the faithful on earth a part in the prayers and good works of each other?
12. Do we all derive benefit from the Masses offered and the instructions given by priests?
13. Why are the faithful called saints?
14. Why have not infidels and Jews a part in the communion of saints?

15. Are heretics and schismatics excluded from the communion of saints?

16. Why have not persons excommunicated a part in the communion of saints?

17. Are public sinners deprived of the communion of saints?

18. Have sinners equally as the just [redacted] the Sacrifice of the Mass?

19. What conclusion should we draw from the truths of the communion of saints?

PRACTICE.

1. Often think of the great advantages arising to you from the communion of saints, and give God thanks that you are a member of it.

2. Never cease regretting that you should ever, by your sins, forfeit your character of saint.

3. Pray earnestly to God for the grace of living and dying in the Communion of saints.

PRAYER.

O God! eternal thanks be to Thee for the instruction which we have now received. We now know what is meant by the *communion of saints*, and the great blessings flowing to us from being members of that sacred society. We are saints, children of God, the descendants and associates of the Lamb! and yet we every day profane a character so noble and glorious! We are called saints! and yet our conduct shows that we are proud, envious, passionate, detractors, and liars. Pardon, O Lord! our past sins; and we promise to lead such lives from this time forward, as to entitle us to be ranked among your saints. Amen.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Q. Is it sufficient for salvation to be members of the true Church?

A. No; "we must avoid evil, and do good." (1 Pet. iii.)

1. In order to be saved, and go to heaven, it is not enough, dear children, "to be members of the true Church," and to believe all the truths which that Church teaches us, the principal of which are contained in the Apostles' Creed; there is required, moreover, that we should "avoid evil," that is, fly from every sort of vice, renounce every sort of sin, and be prepared to lay down our lives sooner than commit those *evil* doings and sayings which the Lord God has strictly prohibited. No matter how sincerely devoted to the Church we be, if we do not "avoid evil"—for example, cursing, swearing, immodest acts, words, and thoughts, stealing—we shall never be saved.

2. To obtain salvation, not only should we "avoid evil," but we must also "do good," that is, we must lead a holy life, faithfully observe the Commandments of God and His Church, and practise every Christian virtue. "Not every one who saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who doth the will of My Father who is heaven, he shall enter the kingdom of heaven," says Jesus Christ. The advantages of being members of the Church are indeed very great in themselves; but, as St. James remarks, they will avail us little without good works. If our

actions agree not with our belief, and our lives correspond not with the purity of the faith we profess, we can never enter heaven. There are thousands who are sincere and devoted members of the Church, but as they perform not what God has commanded, they will never gain eternal "salvation."

3. St. Augustin tells us that the greatest enemies of Christianity, and the most dangerous persecutors of the Church, are those who, whilst openly professing themselves "members of the true Church," dishonour that Church by the irregularity of their lives, and the looseness of their morals. The great disparity between the belief and practice of wicked Catholics scandalizes those who are out of the Church, increases their prejudices against Catholic belief, strengthens their false notions, and removes them farther away from the truth. Nothing is more holy than their belief, nothing more disorderly than their behaviour. They believe like saints, but live like infidels; they are Catholics in theory and speculation, but are no better than Turks and Mahometans in practice.

4. Scarce was the Church of Christ established when an error was broached, declaring that howsoever irregular were the lives of men, it was sufficient for salvation if they believed as Christians. The Nicolaits, and the disciples of Simon the magician, were the first who upheld this impious doctrine, a doctrine so absurd as to carry with it its own condemnation; for who can suppose that Jesus Christ came on earth to found a religion which should encourage crime, and screen the perpetrators of the most frightful excesses from punishment, provided they but believed in Him? Our Saviour, on the contrary, tells us that "every tree that does not bring forth good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire." (Matt. vii. 9.) St. James tells us that "as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." (St. James, ii. 26.) Oh! how we should

dread, dear children, belying our faith by our irregular lives and scandalous behaviour! If our immoral conduct give the lie to our professions, and that we neither *avoid evil* nor *do good*, have we not reason to fear that we shall be punished by God with more severity than pagans and infidels who never received the light of the Gospel, nor had the happiness to be members of the true Church?

Q. "What good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?"

A. "If thou wilt enter into life," says Christ, "keep the commandments." (Matt. xix. 17.)

5. One day a young man came to Jesus, and asked Him what he was to do in order to be saved. And Jesus, in reply, said to the young man, that if he wished to obtain salvation, and "enter into life," he should observe the Commandments. So that it is not enough to believe all that God has taught, we must likewise obey what He has commanded, observe His sacred law, in order to be saved; we must avoid sin, practise virtue, fulfil all our duties towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves. It is not sufficient for salvation to keep some of the commandments, but all of them must be observed; for as St. James says: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all" (ii. 10), that is to say, he becomes a transgressor of the law in such a manner, that the observance of all the other points will not avail him to salvation.

6. As, dear children, God requires of us that we should keep all and every one of His commandments in order to gain heaven, how very necessary is it that we should be fully instructed in them, that we should know how many there are, what is it that is commanded, and what forbidden by each of them. If we know not the Commandments, nor the duties which they point

out to us, how can we "keep" them? If we are ignorant of what God commands or prohibits, how can we observe His holy law? Let us, then, be always careful to obtain a knowledge of the Commandments, let us make every exertion to be able, not only to repeat them, but also to understand them fully, that we may faithfully "keep" them.

Q. What commandments am I to keep?
A. The Ten Commandments of God.

7. The Commandments that we are required to keep are ten in number, and are called "the Commandments of God," because they were directly given by God to His servant Moses. "The Ten Commandments" are often called the *Decalogue*. The word decalogue is derived from the Greek words Δέκα, ten, and λόγος, a word, signifying ten sayings or ten precepts. The *Decalogue*, or Ten Commandments, were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, by God, three months after the Israelites had left the land of Egypt. The manner in which the commandments were given is described to us in the book of Exodus.

8. In the nineteenth chapter of that book we are told that the Lord appeared to Moses on the Mount, and told him to remind the Israelites of the many wonders which He wrought in their favour, and to declare to them the merciful designs that He still had upon them, if they would only be faithful in His service, and keep His Commandments. Moses accordingly called the people together, and related to them the words which the Lord had spoken, and they at once cried out that they would do whatever the Lord should command them. After a second interview with the Lord, Moses gave the people notice to prepare for the third day, when they should hear God Himself speaking to them from the top of Mount Sinai. And that they might be worthy to appear before Him, he ordered them in the meantime

to live continently, to sanctify themselves, and to wash their garments. Around the foot of the holy mountain, Moses, by an order from God, drew a boundary, which he charged them not to pass over under the pain of death.

9. "And now the third day was come, and the morning appeared, and behold thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the Mount, and the noise of the trumpet sounded exceeding loud, and the people that was in the camp feared." The whole circumference of the mountain was at once involved in thick smoke, and a continuous stream of flame arose as from a glowing furnace. The shrill and swelling sounds of a trumpet were also heard at the same time, and the people were terrified, and lay close within their tents. The Lord then called Moses, announced His Ten Commandments in a powerful and terrible voice, in presence of all the people, who were ranged in order at the foot of the mountain. The people, terrified at the voice of God, and at the flames, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mount all in smoke, said to Moses: "Speak thou to us, and we will hear; let not the Lord speak to us lest we die." And Moses in reply said to them: "Fear not, for God is come to prove you, and that the dread of Him might be in you, and you should not sin," that is to say, God has given you His Law in this sublime, solemn manner, in order to inspire you with a salutary dread, and to induce you to observe it with greater fidelity.

10. Almighty God was pleased to speak no more in person to the Israelites, but to deliver His subsequent commands through the ministry of Moses. For that purpose He called him up again to the mountain, where in a private conference He gave him many other fresh instructions, and after having fully explained Himself to His inspired law-giver upon every particular, handed him two tables of stone, on both sides of which He had,

with His own finger, written "the Ten Commandments," as the abridgment and groundwork of all His other precepts. Forty days and forty nights were spent in secret interview between God and Moses. During that time the people had forgotten, not only Moses, but the very God whose appearance a few weeks before on the very mountain on which still they were, filled them with such dread and alarm. Not knowing what became of Moses, they collected around Aaron, and insisted in a threatening manner that, like other nations, they should have an idol that may go before them. Aaron refused not their request, and gave orders that the golden earrings of their wives, sons, and daughters should be brought together. And when they were collected, he melted them down together, and formed the image of a golden calf, which was adored as the god of Israel.

11. At the very hour that they were adoring the idol, Moses, by the express command of God, came down from the mountain with the two Tables of the Law in his hand. Amazed at the sounds he heard, he hastened to see what was the cause of them, and as he approached the camp, he found the people dancing and singing round the golden calf. At this sight, grief and indignation filled his breast, and in a transport of rage, he threw down the tables from his hands and broke them in pieces at the foot of the mount; for of what use could they be, he thought, to a people who had blotted the Law out of their hearts. He seized the idol they had made, broke it down, and cast it into the fire, and when it was reduced to powder, he mixed it with water, and gave it to the Israelites to drink. He then marshaled the whole tribe of Levi against the transgressors, and about three and twenty thousand men were put to the sword.

12. With a heart ready to burst with grief, he returned to the Mount, and begged pardon of God for the sins of the people. His fervent prayer was heard, and God was again reconciled to His people. Moses was

again ordered to hew out two other tables of stone like those he had broken, that the Commandments may be written on them as they had been written on the first. After a conference of forty days and nights between God and Moses, during which time Moses neither ate nor drank, Moses took up the two Tables of stone on which God had written "the Ten Commandments," and came down from the mountain, his face lighted up with a bright blaze of glory.

Q. Say the Ten Commandments of God.

A. 1. I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. 2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. 3. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. 4. Honour thy father and thy mother. 5. Thou shalt not kill. 6. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 7. Thou shalt not steal. 8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife. 10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods. (Exod. xx.)

13. These "Ten Commandments" contain a summary or abridgment of all the duties which we owe God, our neighbour, and ourselves. God, as you have already been told, gave them to Moses, written with His own finger on two Tables of stone. On one stone were written the three first Commandments, which comprise our duties towards God; and on the other stone we e written the remaining seven Commandments, which contain the duties we owe our neighbour, and are a development of that universal law of nature—"Do to others that which you wish should be done to yourself." Each of the Commandments is either positive or negative—that is, it commands or forbids something. The fourth Commandment, for example, orders us to honor our parents,

and the seventh forbids us to steal. However, the Commandments ordering us, include, too, a prohibition, for when we are commanded to honor our parents, we are at the same time forbidden to do anything contrary to the honor due to them.

14. These "Ten Commandments," at least as to substance, were not new; if we except the determination of the Sabbath-day, they were all contained in the *natural Law*, by which before the time of Moses, all mankind were obliged. In the beginning God impressed upon the heart of man a sense of right and wrong, called the Law of nature, which pointed out to him his duty, and taught him what he was to do, and what he was to avoid. He gave him a *conscience* as an inward monitor to show him the difference between good and evil, and to move him to practice the one and shun the other. Had man continued in the state of innocence, this knowledge of the *Law of nature*, engraved in the bottom of his heart, would have been a rule and a guide to conduct him to eternal happiness—the end of his creation; but the heart and mind of man having been corrupted by sin, the light of reason and the voice of conscience was, in course of time, so disregarded, and became so darkened, that reason and conscience was at length almost blotted out in the greater part of mankind. Passion having stifled the voice of reason and of conscience, the Lord gave His Law engraved on stone, that man might have continually before his eyes that which had been completely rooted out of his memory, on account of the blindness of his understanding, and the corruption of his heart.

15. God wrote His Commandments in the midst of thunder and lightning, to signify what those might expect who should dare transgress them. He wished, indeed, that His people should comply with His commands, through a feeling of love and gratitude; and for that reason it was, that in giving them He first reminded

them of the many benefits He bestowed on them. "I am," He says, "the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt." But foreseeing that the remembrance of His favours would fail in inducing that stiff-necked and ungrateful race to persevere in the observance of His Law, He wished that its promulgation should be attended with all those external signs calculated to excite terror and alarm in their minds. As the "Ten Commandments" have so solemnly been given us by God, we should always, dear children, say them with the greatest attention, and with the most profound respect for the great majesty of their Author; for saying them hurriedly, carelessly, and without paying the least attention to their meaning, is unbecoming God's children, and displeasing to God Himself.

Q. Is it necessary to keep all and every one of the Ten Commandments?

A. Yes; the Scripture says, "whosoever shall offend in one is become guilty of all," that is, the observance of the other commandments will not avail him to salvation. (James, ii. 10.)

16. Although these words from St. James are not to be taken merely according to the letter, as if implying that a man by transgressing one Commandment, transgressed and broke all the rest; yet such a man, as St. Augustin says, may be said to be "guilty of all," because by one mortal sin he acts against charity (which is the love of God and of our neighbour), upon which depends the whole Law and all it commands, so that by breaking one Commandment he destroys charity, and of course defeats the end of the whole Law—the chief end of whatever the Law of God commands or forbids being charity—and so makes the keeping or not breaking of all the rest unprofitable to him.

17. It may be added, that all the precepts of the Law

are to be considered as one total and entire Law—a chain, as it were, of precepts, and so, if one link of this chain be broken, the whole chain is broken, or the *entirety* of the law, consisting of a collection of precepts. Again, it may be said, that he who breaks any one precept, contemns the authority of the Lawgiver, who imposed them all on us under pain of being for ever excluded from heaven, and from His presence. A sinner, therefore, by transgressing mortally one Commandment, forfeits his right to heaven, becomes the slave of the devil, and renders himself liable to the eternal torments of hell, as if he had transgressed against all, for he so transgresses the law, that "the observance of all the other Commandments will not avail him to salvation."

SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

ELEAZAR MARTYRED FOR NOT VIOLATING THE LAW.

Amongst those Jews who suffered death during the reign of Antiochus, sooner than violate the laws of God, was Eleazar, a chief scribe, and venerable for his piety and grey hairs. He was apprehended by the king's officers, and was violently pressed to eat the flesh of swine, which was forbidden by the Jewish law; so much was he pressed that they forced the flesh into his mouth, but he manfully resisted, and preferred a glorious death to the violation of the law. As he was on his way towards the place of execution, those who accompanied him, being moved with pity and compassion, and respect for his old age, took him aside, and entreated him to allow some legal meats to be set before him, that by eating of them at least he might seem to comply with the king's order, and that would be enough to save his life. The venerable old man knew too well the respect due to the law of God to entertain such a proposal, and magnanimously rejected it. "I would rather die," said he, "than do what you ask me. It becomes not my grey hairs to dissemble so. God forbid that now, at the age of fourscore and ten years, I should sully the purity of my former life; and by giving occasion to the young men to imagine that I had renounced the laws of my forefathers, bring a stain and a curse upon my old age. Miserable, indeed, should I be if the few years that now remain to me could tempt me to act in so

shameful a manner. For although I were to escape the judgments of men for the present, yet neither alive nor dead should I escape the hand of the Almighty. It is far better for me to face death with courage at once, than by a shameful compliance bring shame upon my old age, for so I shall teach my fellow-men, that the laws of God are to be preferred to those of man, and that the duties of religion are to be prized more than any worldly advantages, even than life itself." When he had spoken thus, he was carried to the place of execution, and died a martyr to the laws of God and his country.—2 Mac. vi.

THE GLORIOUS MARTYRDOM OF THE MACHABEES FOR NOT TRANSGRESSING THE LAW.

There were seven brothers, generally known by the name of Machabees, who, with their mother, were apprehended and condemned to be scourged, because they refused to eat swine's flesh, which was condemned by the law of God. Antiochus, the king, presided at the martyrdom, and condemned them all to undergo the same torments, one after another, that the tortures of the foregoing might intimidate and weaken the courage of the next. The eldest son was first called out in the presence of his mother and his brothers to open the torturing scene. Antiochus ordered the executioner to cut out his tongue, to chop off the extremities of his hands and feet, to tear the skin off his head. The orders were at once complied with, and then the body, all mangled, was cast into a large frying pan, that the writhing and almost lifeless body might be consumed by a slow fire. The first being thus tortured to death, the second and the remaining brothers were brought forward in succession, and tormented and slain in the same manner. Each boldly advanced in turn, and bore with the same fortitude the tyrant's tortures. They joyfully submitted to the decrees of God, and were but too happy to lay down their lives sooner than violate His commands. And as if the sight of the torments had filled them with fresh courage, they reproached the tyrant to his face, and told him that he was a cruel scourge in the Almighty's hand, and that in a short time he should reap the bitter fruit of his cruelty and crimes; but as for us, said they, the King of the world, we know, will raise up in the last day all those who lay down their lives for His laws. Six of the brothers had now gloriously triumphed by their death. There still remained the seventh and youngest, and as he was young and tender, the tyrant thought he would be gained by caresses and fair promises; so he promised him, and swore to the performance of the promise, "that he would make him a rich and happy man," and would make him a friend, and provide him with everything he wanted, if he would only violate the law. But when he perceived that his flattering promises made no impression on the

youth, he called the mother, and desired her, if she had any affection and fondness for the only son that now remained to her, to remonstrate with him on his folly, and to advise him to save his life. The mother was devotedly attached to the child; but yet her strength of mind and sense of religion made her despise the tyrant's request, but in derision she promised, as he desired it, that she would advise her son. So bending herself towards him, mocking the cruel tyrant, she said in her own language—"My son, have pity on me that bore thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee suck three years, and nourished thee, and brought thee up unto this age. I beseech thee, my son, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them, and take courage from the view of heaven, and follow the glorious example of your brothers; so that by the mercy of God I may receive thee again with thy brethren in life eternal." And her child was fired with fresh courage by the consoling admonition of his mother, and he called on the executioners to renew the combat, and though he was tortured with fiercer barbarity than the other six brothers, he bore on manfully, and the mother gloried in beholding the last and youngest of her seven sons as unbending and unyielding as the others; and he at last fell under the stroke—his body to the earth, but his soul into limbo. The illustrious mother, having nothing more to fear for her sons, followed them with the same fortitude in their glorious career, and with them laid down her life on the same day, and in the same glorious cause.—2 Machabees, vii.

THE ADVICE OF AN OLD MAN.

A venerable old man seeing a great many children pressing around him, addressed them in the following words, which should never be forgotten:—"My little friends, I have always remarked that working on Sunday has never enriched any one—that property unjustly acquired has never profiteth, and that a disobedient and wicked child never feels happy. If you wish, then, dear little friends, to be happy, even in this life, respect the Commandments of God and keep them."

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. To secure our salvation, is it necessary that we should avoid evil?
2. Is it necessary for salvation that we should perform good works?
3. Who can be called the greatest persecutors of the Church?
4. What error was broached by the Nicholaits?
5. To gain heaven, must we keep all the Commandments?

6. If we know not the Commandments, can we keep them?
7. Why are the Commandments called the decalogue?
8. On what conditions were the Israelites to become the friends of God?
9. In what manner were the Ten Commandments given to the Israelites?
10. What happened in the camp of the Israelites whilst Moses was in converse with God.
11. What occurred when Moses descended from the mount?
12. Did Moses receive from God a second Table of Commandments?
13. How are the Ten Commandments divided?
14. Were the Ten Commandments unknown before the time of Moses?
15. Why did God write the Commandments on tables of stone?
16. What do you mean in saying that by a violation of one Commandment we are guilty of all?
17. In what other way can you explain the text from St. James?

PRACTICE.

1. Always retain a knowledge of the Commandments, that you may be able to repeat them in the order in which they are written.
2. Regard them with respect, and frequently recite them with attention.
3. Beg every day of God the grace of faithfully observing the Commandments.

PRAYER.

O Lord! we have now been taught the manner in which Thy Commandments had been given to us. The history of them has been just laid before us, and we now imagine that we hear Thy voice announcing them in the midst of thunder and lightning, as they had been formerly announced on Mount Sinai; and we are seized with affright as the Israelites were at the foot of the mount. Pardon us, dear Lord, for the little attention we have hitherto paid to Thy Commandments, and aid us in the faithful observance of them for the future. We now promise to regulate our lives, and direct our conduct according to Thy divine Law. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON ADORATION TO BE PAID TO GOD.

Q. Which is the first Commandment?

A. I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

1. When giving His Commandments to the Israelites, God commences by telling them, that He was their Lord and their God; that it was He that brought them out from the land of Egypt, and released them from the slavery in which they groaned under Pharaoh. "I am the Lord thy God," He says; that is, I am He who created everything—heaven, earth, sun, moon, stars; who rules everything, and on whom everything depends; I am your Creator, your Master, your Sovereign Lord, your Judge, from whose goodness you have everything to hope, but from whose justice you have, too, everything to fear—and I, "the Lord thy God," command you "not to have any strange gods before me."

2. What the strange gods were, He goes on to tell them: "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them." (Exodus, xx.) We here see, dear children, that God prohibits all persons from making "a graven thing," or engraving any image or likeness in order to *adore and serve it.* He tells every one of us, as well as the Israelites, that if we make idols—figures of stone, of wood, or of other matter, as the Pagans did; and if we *adore* them, and pay

them homage, He will punish us with the greatest severity, because as He says: "I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children."

3. They are called "strange gods," because such gods should be unknown to God's chosen people, who should recognise but the one true God, whom Noah taught his children to adore. St. Paul calls Noah a preacher of justice, because he taught his sons the knowledge of the one true God, and of a Messiah that was to come, and gave them commandments by which they might know what was right and what wrong. However, it was the misfortune of his descendants that they did not preserve this knowledge. Instead of continuing to adore the God of heaven, that pure Spirit who cannot be seen by mortal eyes, they began to wish for objects of adoration, which they might be able to see; and so they were led to make images, or "graven things," which soon came to be considered as gods.

4. First, they began to adore the sun, moon, and stars, thinking from their beautiful appearance, and the regularity of their movements, that they must be gods. And not long after they began to adore the image of some great king, calling it a God. Then they worshipped the images of four-footed beasts, and the beasts themselves, and paid their adoration even to stones. St. Paul says of the Gentiles or nations: "That when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptable man, of birds and four-footed beasts, and of creeping things." (Rom. i. 21.) This crying sin of idolatry had spread far and wide, when God gave His Commandments on Mount Sinai; and to check the progress of so great an evil, God commenced by saying: "Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me."

Q. What is commanded by the First Commandment?

A. To adore one God, and to adore but Him alone.

5. "By the First Commandment," we are required "to adore one God;" that is, to acknowledge Him as the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all things. The word *adore* (in Hebrew *scahah*), taken in its literal sense, means to carry the hand to the mouth, to kiss the hand through respect; and in all eastern countries, raising the hand to the lips and kissing it, is considered one of the greatest marks of respect and submission. "Those who adore," says St. Jerome, "kiss the hand." And in the Third Book of Kings it is said: "And I will leave me seven thousand men in Israel, whose knees have not been bowed before Baal, and every mouth that hath not worshipped him kissing the hands." (3 Kings, xix.) Adoration means also a prostration before some one, or making a low, respectful bow, either for the purpose of saluting him, or of requesting some favour, or thanking him for some favour received. This mode of salutation was generally practised by the people of the East towards those for whom they entertained deep respect; and it is in this sense that the word *adore* is to be taken whenever in Scripture there is mention made of *adoration* being paid to men or angels. When the word *adore* is applied to God, it signifies the supreme worship which is due to God alone: it is called *latria*, from the Greek word λατρεία, which means service, and, in its original signification, means the respect, the services, and all the duties which a servant owes his master. Hence, we make use of this word to point out the worship which we should pay to God.

6. "To adore one God" is, then, to acknowledge His sovereign power and dominion over all things; to confess our entire dependence on Him for everything that

we have and are, and to pay Him reverence on account of His supreme majesty and greatness. This is the homage that we owe to God; and is there anything more just than that we should pay it to Him? He is the only Being that exists of Himself. He alone is all-powerful, for in His presence everything created is but weakness. It is He who, by His sole will, has drawn all creatures out of nothing, and by the same will preserves them from falling into their original nothingness. Is it not to Him that we are indebted for our lives and the preservation of our lives? Everything we have and are, do we not hold from Him? Is it not He that has redeemed us from the slavery of hell? He is our Creator, our Father, our Saviour, and our God. We should then bless Him, praise Him, thank Him, and pay Him every possible adoration and reverence, both *internal* and *external*.

7. It is "God alone" that we should adore; for adoration being an act of humble submission, by which we acknowledge the greatness and excellence of a Supreme Being, and the unlimited power which He exercises over everything in existence, no one but God can be entitled to it. "To adore" a creature, would be an acknowledgment that everything belonged to him, and that everything depended on him; but such worship would be folly equally as impiety. If, sometimes, we meet in Scripture with the word *adore* being applied to creatures—as, for example, in the Book of Genesis, where it is said that Abraham, on seeing the three men, "adored down to the ground"—the word is not to be taken in its literal meaning, but as signifying only honour, reverence, respect, or esteem.

Q. In how many ways should we adore God?

A. We should adore God in two ways: internally, with the soul, and externally, with the body.

8. We adore God "internally," when we bow down

in spirit before His infinite majesty; when we protest to Him, from the bottom of our hearts, that we believe in Him, hope in Him, and submit ourselves altogether to Him as our first principle and last end. It is called *internal* adoration, because we say nothing, do nothing, nor give the least outward sign of the adoration that we are paying to God. This form of adoration is agreeable to God, who sees into our hearts; and it has this great advantage, that we can render it to Him at all times and in all places, and in the midst of our ordinary occupations and worldly actions. "To adore God" in spirit by some pious ejaculation now and then costs no great trouble, nor does it require much time, or interrupt, in the least, our external duties. It is a short and easy practice of adoring God, and can be practiced on all occasions, without exposing ourselves to the danger of vain glory, which often attends external adoration.

9. *External* adoration consists in manifesting outwardly by some sign the interior respect we have for God, as for example, bending the knee, inclining the head, falling prostrate on the ground, signing ourselves with the sign of the cross. These are so many acts of adoration, and are very pleasing to God when they proceed from a heart filled with respect and reverence for Him. "Come let us adore and fall down before the Lord," says King David.

10. *Internal* and *external* adoration we owe to God. The obligation of paying to God *external* worship has been acknowledged at all times and in all places. There is no nation without its sacrifices, its ceremonies, and its religious feasts. All the saints have practised the external forms of worship; the Church has always recommended the observance of these forms, after the example of Jesus Christ, who, in the garden of Olives, "fell upon His face, praying" to His heavenly Father. Yes, *external* worship has been always considered as an

indispensable duty which man owes to God, because, in the first place, our bodies no less than our souls belong to God, for we were created body and soul on purpose to honour, serve, and adore Him, and so He has of course a full right and title to the homage both of soul and body, as both are equally His sole property. In the second place, *external* adoration flows naturally from *internal* worship; for the union of soul and body is such, that when the mind is deeply affected with anything, it naturally makes an impression on the body, and influences it; thus, grief and sorrow appear in sobs and tears; joy and laughter in a cheerful countenance. Hence, if the soul be deeply afflicted with a feeling of its own unworthiness, and of the great majesty of God, this must naturally show itself in outward acts of humiliation in the body, such as kneeling, inclination of the head, prostration of oneself, and the like. And we know, from experience, that these outward acts of adoration made by the body, serve also, in a considerable degree, to strengthen and increase the inward humiliation of the soul, and to render our internal homage more fervent.

11. But *external* worship must be attended with *internal* worship, otherwise it will be false and hypocritical. If our hearts have no part in what we do or say, our forms of worship, such as bending the knee, inclining the head, falling on the face, making the sign of the cross, are so many forms of deceit and falsehood. As external worship is only the outward sign and expression of interior worship, therefore to testify outwardly a respect which the heart does not feel is to act the part of a liar and a hypocrite, is to bring down on oneself the reproach which Jesus Christ made formerly to the Jews:—"This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."—Matt. xv.

Q. When should we make acts of adoration to God?

A. We should adore God morning and evening, and when we assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

12. We are, dear children, obliged to "adore God" always, inasmuch as we should be always disposed to prefer Him to everything else. But besides this general obligation, we are in particular required to make acts of adoration "morning and evening," and when we assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In the "morning" when we awake we should adore God by giving Him our first thoughts; offering to Him our hearts; making acts of faith, hope, and charity; placing ourselves on our knees to pray to Him, and consecrate to Him the actions of the day. In the "evening" we should adore God, return Him thanks for His benefits, and ask pardon of our sins. In the old Law God ordained that every morning and evening, sacrifice should be offered to Him. On Sundays and Holydays we should often adore God, for these days have been set aside by the Church in order that God should be adored and served. But unhappily a great many spend these days without a single look towards God, without prayer or the performance of one religious act; without even signing themselves with the cross!

Q. How are we to adore God?

A. By Faith, Hope, and Charity; by Prayer and Sacrifice.

13. When we place ourselves in the presence of God in order to adore Him, we should first excite ourselves to make an act of "Faith," declaring that we believe everything which has been revealed by Him, and which His Church proposes for our belief, and that in all things we submit our understanding to His revealed word, no matter how incomprehensible it be. In the second place we are "to adore God" by "Hope," that is, placing all our confidence in Him, telling Him that relying on His power, goodness, and mercy, we expect favours and blessings from Him whilst we are here on earth,

and the eternal enjoyment of Him in heaven hereafter. In the third place we are "to adore God" by "Charity," that is by making acts of love towards Him, protesting that we love Him with our whole hearts, because He is infinitely good; that we rejoice at all the glory and honor that are given Him by the blessed Spirits in Heaven and by His faithful servants on earth; that we are resolved with the assistance of His grace, to sacrifice everything, however dear to us, sooner than forfeit His friendship and love; that we are prepared to submit to His holy will in everything, and that we resign all that we have, property, riches, reputation, into His hands, so that He may dispose of them and us as He pleases.

14. "By prayer and Sacrifice," too, we are "to adore God;" for praying to Him is an act of religious worship, by which we acknowledge our own weakness, misery, and unworthiness, our entire dependence upon, and our subjection to Him. "By prayer" we also acknowledge Him to be our Sovereign Lord, and the Giver of all good, and so we honor His infinite goodness, through which we hope to obtain what we stand in need of. "Prayer" is founded upon faith and hope, for, in fact, we pray to God; because we believe He is able and willing to help us, and because we hope in His sacred promises, that through the merits of Christ He will help us.

15. "By Sacrifice" we should also adore God. "Sacrifice" is a form of adoration most agreeable to Him, for in "sacrifice" there is a particular form and rite used, by which we express the homage which we owe to Him, and which cannot be given to any one but to Him alone; and in this it differs from all other outward actions of respect and reverence, as for example, uncovering the head, bowing, kneeling down, for they are used towards men as well as towards God. All those nations, however barbarous and savage, that ever acknowledged the existence of a Supreme Being, have always considered "sacrifice" as a necessary

worship due to God: and from the very beginning of the world, "sacrifice" has been always used by His holy servants, as a necessary part of religion, and accepted by Him as an agreeable homage from their hands. In the earliest times, Almighty God was pleased to make known to His chosen people, the manner in which He would be worshipped by them. He expressly instituted several kinds of sacrifices as the most sacred part of their religion, and so strictly did He claim "sacrifice" as the worship due to Himself alone, that the person who should dare give it to any other, was commanded to be put to death.

This is the manner in which, dear children, we are "to adore God." *Believing* in Him, and in all He has done and said; *hoping* from His divine mercy for salvation and everything necessary to gain it; *loving* Him more than anything in the world; fervently *praying* to Him, and in particular offering up to Him the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, are the best means "to adore God."

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

AMAN AND THE PUNISHMENT OF MORDOCHÆI.

Aman, son of Madath, belonged to the race of Agage, who reigned at the time of Saul. Assuerus, king of Persia, conceived an attachment for Aman, and gave him the first place in his kingdom. All the king's servants who were stationed at the palace gate, bent the knee to Aman and worshipped him, for such were the king's orders. Mardochæi, a poor Jew, however, refused him the homage which was given him by every one else. Aman was exceedingly angry to see Mardochæi refuse him an homage which the other chief servants of the king servilely paid him, and knowing him to be a Jew, resolved that not only he but his whole nation should feel the weight of his resentment. He took an opportunity of representing to the king, that the Jews were an insolent, lawless people, who, by their religious tenets, embroiled the state and disturbed the peace of his subjects. The prince believed all that his favourite told him, and gave him power to act as he pleased in the matter. Aman had all he wanted: he drew up an edict, to which he affixed the king's

seal, requiring that every Jew throughout the Persian dominions should be massacred without distinction of age or sex. The publication of this edict threw the Jews into the utmost consternation. Through every town in the different provinces where the order was established, great were the lamentations and cries of the oppressed people bemoaning their unhappy destiny. But almighty God in His goodness had provided for their safety by means of Esther, niece to Mardochæi, and who had been selected by Assuerus to become his wife. The king one day bade her ask whatever she pleased, and he would grant it, though it were half his kingdom. Esther, in the mournful accents of a suppliant, humbly begged that if she had found favour in his eyes, the king would please to suffer her and her people to enjoy the common light, which the malice of her enemies were ready to deprive them of. If, said she, we had been only sold for slaves, and been permitted to drag out life in chains, I should not have complained, but I should lament our fate in silence; but now that we are destined to the slaughter, it is a cruelty, it is a disgrace, which falls back on the king himself. The king stood amazed, and not knowing the affair, asked what and whom she meant. The queen then, pointing to Aman, said, he is the man, he is our enemy, who by abusing the favour of the king, has sent forth an edict for the massacre of the whole Jewish people, whose only crime is their religion and fidelity to God. Assuerus was shocked at the horrid intentions of Aman; he indignantly arose from his seat and left the room. When the king returned to the room, he found Aman at Esther's feet, imploring her protection, and thinking that he was guilty of offering violence to the queen, he sentenced him to death; and on the very gibbet that he had prepared the day before for Mardochæi's execution, he was hanged, according to the king's order.—Esther, v.

SYMPHORIANUS MARTYRED FOR ADORING GOD.

Symphorianus, a native of Autun in France, seeing the vile superstitions that were paid to Cybele, a pagan goddess, expressed his abhorence of them in no measured terms. He was at once apprehended, and carried before the governor, a fiery zealot for the worship of his false gods, and lately come to a full determination to exterminate every Christian in the place. Seeing Symphorianus standing before his tribunal: "How is it," said he to him, "that thou hast eluded my vigilance? I thought that I had cleared the city of those who call themselves Christians. Tell me, why thou refusest to adore the great Cybele?" "I am a Christian," replied Symphorianus. "I adore but one God, who reigns in heaven. Your idol is an invention of the evil spirit, a deceitful artifice for the destruction

of souls." The judge said: "Art thou ignorant of the imperial mandate which makes it death for all who refuse to worship the gods?" "I only fear the Supreme Omnipotent God, who has created me," answered the fearless youth; "Him only do I adore. My body is at your disposal, not so my soul. I fear not death. My God has given me life, my duty is to give it to him back again, whenever He demands it. He is the rewarder of virtue, as well as the punisher of vice. I never can receive the heavenly rewards of virtue but by my perseverance in the glorious confession of His holy name. All earthly goods are borne away by time as by a rapid torrent. Permanent happiness is the gift of God alone. The glory and happiness He bestows, is eternal, like himself. The beginning of His existence no age, the most remote, has ever seen; and no succession of ages shall ever see it end!" The judge grew angry at such discourse, and, as the holy youth persisted in his refusal of worshipping the gods, condemned him to be beheaded. He heard the sentence with joy. As he was carried out of the town to execution, his mother, standing on the walls of the city to see him pass by, cried out to him: "My son, my son Symphorian: remember the living God and be of good courage. Raise your heart to heaven, and consider Him that reigneth there. Fear not death, which leads to certain life." He suffered about the year 178.—*Alban Butler.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What did God say to the Israelites in giving them His Commandments?
2. What were the strange Gods which the Israelites should not adore?
3. Why were they called strange gods?
4. What objects did the descendants of Noah adore?
5. Has the word "adore" different meanings?
6. What is meant by the word "adore" when applied to God?
7. Should adoration be paid to any one but God?
8. What do you mean by internal adoration?
9. What is meant by external or outward adoration?
10. How do you prove that we are bound to pay God external adoration?
11. Should internal worship accompany external?
12. When, in particular, should we adore God?
13. In what particular way should we adore God?
14. Why should we adore God by prayer?
15. Which form of adoration is most agreeable to God?

PRACTICE.

1. Never blush at paying God the worship that he requires at your hands.
2. Let interior adoration of God be often accompanied by outward marks, such as bending the knee, and bowing the head.
3. During prayer and the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, let your posture indicate the great reverence you entertain for God.

PRAYER.

Supreme Being! only object of my adoration! Beauty, ever ancient and always new, too late have I commenced to love Thee. Young, though I be, still too late I have learned to adore, praise, and bless Thee. Pardon, O my Lord! my past forgetfulness of Thee: and now that I see my great obligations to adore and reverence Thee, I shall in future faithfully discharge them. Yes, my God, I adore and love Thee with my whole heart and soul. I adore Thee above everything, because Thou art my great Lord, Master, and Benefactor. I wish to live and die blessing and praising Thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

Q. What is Faith?

A. A divine virtue, by which we firmly believe what God has taught.

1. There are three "divine" or theological virtues, which are named, Faith, Hope, and Charity. They are called theological or "divine," because they have an immediate reference to God. The word *virtue* means strength; and in man virtue is the strength of the soul. Strength and courage are necessary for the performance of what is good, because our passions tyrannize over us,

and are continually hurrying us on to evil. Besides the three theological virtues, there are many moral virtues, the principal of which are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, called *cardinal*, from the Latin word *cardo*, which means a *hinge*, because they are as *the hinges* on which the whole Christian life must roll, and by which it is supported. The moral virtues are so called, because they regulate our morals and direct our whole conduct according to the law of God. But great and excellent though the moral virtues be, they are inferior to the "divine" virtues about which we are now to speak.

2. The three theological or "divine" virtues are so necessary to salvation, that whoever does not possess them, and make acts of them, can never enter Heaven. "He who believes, and is baptized," says Jesus Christ, "will be saved, but he who believes not shall be condemned." (Mark xvi. 16.) And St. Paul says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi. 6. With regard to the necessity of hope for salvation, the prophet David says: "Trust in the Lord and do good . . . Commit thy way to the Lord and trust in Him, and he will do it." (Ps. xxxvi. 3, 5.) And in his Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul says: "Do not therefore lose your confidence, which hath a great reward." (Heb. x. 35.) And that reward is the very salvation we hope for; for, "we are saved by hope," as the same Apostle tells us in his Epistle to the Romans. In order to gain Heaven, we must, too, have charity. Jesus Christ expressly lays down the necessity of charity for salvation, in saying: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, with all thy strength and with all thy mind." (St. Mat. xxii. 37.) And "if any one," says the Apostle, "love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (1 Cor. xvi. 22), that is, cut off from the society of the faithful.

3. The first of the theological or divine virtues is "Faith." It is called a "virtue," that is, a good habit of the soul—a disposition, a facility in the performance of acts pleasing to God. Faith is "a *divine* virtue," because it proceeds from the goodness and liberality of God, and cannot be acquired by our own natural strength alone. St. Paul declares this truth, saying: "By grace you are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8.) Faith is "a divine virtue by which we firmly believe," that is, *believe* without the least doubt, with a full certainty, a perfect conviction, and an entire assurance. Faith means more than an opinion, more than a judgment, for it implies an entire assent, a perfect acquiescence of the understanding in all the truths that God has taught or revealed, no matter how incomprehensible they be. I *believe* is the same as if it were said, I am so persuaded of this thing that I hold it as most certain, and have not the least doubt of it. Faith is a *firm* belief, for it admits of neither uncertainty nor hesitation, but embraces *at once* every truth revealed by God.

4. Faith requires a belief in all that "God has taught," that is, in everything that He has been pleased to teach and make known to mankind, either through the ministry of His angels or through the mouth of His prophets, or, in fine, by His Son, whose words have been transmitted to us by the Apostles who had heard them from His mouth, and who had been commissioned by this adorable Son to propagate His doctrine through the whole world. All the truths which "God has taught" must be believed. Faith will not allow of the rejection of even one; and he who should voluntarily entertain a doubt of one single article—one sole point of faith—could not be said to have faith.

Q. How do we know, *with certainty*, what God has taught?

A. By the authority of His Church, which is "the pillar and ground of truth." (1 Tim. iii. 15.)

5. We can, dear children, know "*with certainty* what God has taught," through the ministry of His Church, to whom He has confided the sacred treasures of His divine word, and whom He commissioned to "teach all nations." It is on the authority of the Church, the depository of God's truths, that we must believe everything taught by God. It is to her that we must listen. It is by the light of the Church, which, according to St. Paul, is "the pillar and ground of truth," that we are to distinguish the truths revealed by God from those which are not; for our blessed Saviour having committed the whole body of revealed truths to His Church, and having given us the most infallible assurance that His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, should abide with her for ever, and teach her all truth, we cannot have the least fear that she can ever be deceived in what she teaches. To suppose that the Church could be capable of error would be injurious to Jesus Christ Himself, as it would convey the imputation that He was wanting in the promises that He solemnly made.

Q. Why do we believe what God has taught?

A. Because He is the *infallible truth*, and therefore cannot deceive or be deceived.

6. There are many things, dear children, that we believe, because we either see them with our eyes, examine them by our other senses, or because we know of their existence from the testimony of learned and trustworthy persons. But a belief of that nature is not *faith*, but *experience* or *reason*. Faith does not rest on what we see, examine, or know from the testimony of others, as *human* belief or opinion does; no, it is founded on the authority of God Himself. We believe everything that

God has taught or revealed, precisely for this reason, that *God has said it.* The word of God is the *why* and *wherefore* of our belief; it is the motive and foundation of our faith. And what can be more reasonable, than that we should firmly believe whatever God has told us? Is He not "the infallible truth" itself? Whom can we believe if we believe not God? He "cannot deceive, or be deceived," for His knowledge is infinite, and His veracity is undoubted. No, dear children, God "cannot deceive" anyone, "or be deceived" Himself, "because He is the infallible truth," and His words, as the prophet David says, "are pure words, as silver tried by the fire, purged from the earth, refined seven times." (Ps. xxi. 7).

Q. What sort of homage do we pay to God by Faith?

A. By Faith we acknowledge that God is the sovereign truth, and submit our weak understanding to His word.

7. "By faith," dear children, we make an acknowledgment that God is incapable of being deceived Himself, or of deceiving us, and that He "is the sovereign truth," and truth itself. "By faith," too, we acknowledge that God being infinite in everything, knows and understands a great many things which our weak understanding cannot comprehend. "By faith" we pay him the sacrifice of our reason—our weak and feeble reason—by submitting "our weak understanding to His word," and by fully and entirely acquiescing, without the least doubt and uncertainty, in all the truths which He has revealed, although there are many of them incomprehensible to us. This is the homage that we pay to God by faith; this is the homage that we pay Him, when we believe all that He has said, precisely because *He has said it.*

Q. What is Hope?

A. A divine virtue by which we firmly hope for eternal life, and for the means to obtain it.

8. Hope, in general, means an ardent desire, accompanied with a confident expectation of acquiring some absent and possible good. Hope is divided into human hope and divine hope. Human hope, which is always attended with uncertainty, consists in the desire, together with the expectation of obtaining some temporal advantage, as, for example, a prize, an inheritance. The desire must be accompanied with a firm confidence of acquiring it, because desire alone is not hope. A man may ardently desire a thing, and yet despair of obtaining it: as the poor man desires riches, the sick man desires health, and a person condemned to die desires life, though neither of them has any hope of obtaining what he wishes for. Hence, the desire of any good, in order to be hope, must be attended with a confidence of acquiring it.

9. Christian hope is "a divine" or supernatural "virtue," by which we expect with a firm confidence the possession of God, and the graces necessary to gain that end. Hope is "a virtue," that is to say, a good habit of our soul, a disposition, a facility in performing acts pleasing to God. It is "a divine virtue," for we cannot have it of ourselves, but from God, who by His grace, infuses it into our souls. By hope, we expect, with a firm confidence, that is, with a full assurance, without any fear of being disappointed in our expectation, "eternal life," that is, a heavenly kingdom, an incorruptible crown, a river of delights, a torrent of pleasures, the unveiled, unclouded view of God. Seeing God, face to face, and such as He is—the enjoyment of God Himself for ever and ever—is the object of hope. But, as by our own strength we never could acquire "eternal life;" which is the possession of God, nor could take the least step towards it, "we firmly hope for the means to obtain it," that is, the grace which God has promised through the merits of Jesus Christ; for it is from God that we are to expect salvation, and the necessary helps for obtaining it.

Q. Why do we hope in God?

A. Because He is infinitely powerful, good, and merciful; and because He is faithful to His word, and has promised all graces, even heaven itself, through Jesus Christ, to all those who keep His commandments.

10. The grounds of our hope in God are no less than some of the most essential perfections of God Himself; that is, His infinite power, unbounded goodness, exceeding great mercy, and His great fidelity, which can never deceive. We hope in God, "because He is infinitely powerful, good, and merciful;" for, being "infinitely powerful," we know that God is able to help and save us; and that whatever difficulties we may have to encounter, however strong or numerous our enemies are, we can, by the *infinite power* of God, surmount all our difficulties and subdue all our enemies. We hope in God, because He is infinitely "good and merciful," for by His infinite *goodness* and *mercy*, we are assured that God is not only willing, but most desirous to help us, and display His goodness and mercy in our favour—that He wills our salvation, and is prepared to grant us all necessary aids to enable us to acquire it. We hope in God, "because He is faithful to His word, and has promised all graces, even heaven itself, through Jesus Christ, to those who keep His commandments." By His being "faithful to His word," we are made certain that He will be always ready, and never fail to bestow "all graces," every blessing, every favour, and "even heaven itself," on all those who observe His law, and faithfully "keep His commandments." He has frequently engaged His sacred word and promise to grant us every grace, and bring us to eternal happiness, if we be not wanting on our parts to fulfil those conditions to which His promises are annexed. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice," says He, "and all

these things shall be added to you." (Mat. vi. 33.) In the Apocalypse, He promises eternal salvation if we continue faithful to Him to the end, and overcome the enemies of our souls. "To him that shall overcome I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also have overcome, and am set down with my Father on His throne." (Rev. iii. 21.)

11. That which renders our hope firm and solid are the merits of "Jesus Christ." Our divine Saviour has made full satisfaction for us to the justice of His Father, and, by His humiliations and sufferings, has *merited* for us all the aids and graces necessary to gain heaven. Everything that we ask in His name we shall certainly obtain, and this it is that should render our confidence firm and unwavering; this it is that should give us a perfect assurance that God will not withhold anything that may contribute to our eternal happiness. "He," says St. Paul, "that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things." (Rom. viii. 32.)

Q. What homage do we pay God by hope?

A. By hope we acknowledge that God is inviolably faithful to all His promises, and that He alone can make us happy.

12. "By hope" we acknowledge that God is not, as mortals are, subject to inconstancy or change; that He has the power of fulfilling all that He has promised; and that, being infinitely perfect, He cannot lie, and that, consequently, He is "faithful to all His promises." We, too, acknowledge "by hope," that all creatures cannot satisfy the cravings of our hearts; that it is God alone who can make us happy; and we say to Him with St. Augustin: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, Lord, and our hearts will never be at ease until they repose in Thee." In this manner it is, dear children, that we honour God by hope; such is the homage that we pay Him when we expect with confidence, from His infinite

goodness, eternal life, and the means necessary to obtain it.

Q. What is Charity?

A. A divine virtue, by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbours as ourselves, for the love of God.

13. Charity is a virtue. You have already heard explained, dear children, the meaning of the word virtue. Charity is a "divine virtue," for of ourselves we cannot possess it, as "it is diffused into our hearts by the Holy Ghost." (Rom. v. 5.) Charity is a divine virtue, "by which we love God above all things;" that is, by which we fix our hearts on God as our sovereign happiness and our last end—on Him who alone can make us happy for ever, and who is the end of all our desires. Is it not just that we should love the Lord our God? Is it not He who has created and formed us from nothing? So, should we not love Him, the Author of our very existence—Him from whom we have received the faculty of knowing and loving? Is it not He that has sent His adorable Son into the world in order that He might redeem us from the slavery of Satan? Is He not loading us every day with fresh favours and graces? Is there one single instant in our lives that is not marked by some token of His goodness to us? In short, is it not He that has prepared for us, in the world to come, unspeakable and never-ending delights? And are not all these powerful motives for loving Him?

14. Charity requires that we should "love God above all things," that is, that we should prefer Him in our mind and heart, in our esteem and love, before everything else, without exception; that we should not only judge and believe that God is infinitely preferable to everything else, but should in reality give Him this

preference in our affections upon all occasions; that we should be willing and ready actually to part with everything, and, as St. Paul expresses it, to "suffer the loss of all things," rather than to lose Him by sin. Our Saviour speaks clearly and plainly on this point: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me." (Mat. x. 37.)

15. We must "love God above all things for His own sake," that is, on account of Himself, because *He is what He is*, and not on account of the reward attached to the practice of His love. This was the love which holy King David had for God, when he cried out in a heavenly transport: "For what have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth?" (Ps. lxii. 25.) As if he had said, I aspire neither to the goods of heaven nor to those of earth; I aspire to nothing else than to Thee alone, O God! The love which springs from the grateful recollection of benefits received, and from the hope of promised blessings, is undoubtedly praiseworthy; it is good, it is holy; but to "love God for His own sake," is true love, is perfect love.

16. To love God "for His own sake," is, dear children, to love Him on account of His infinite perfections —because He is the most beautiful, the most excellent of all beings, in comparison of whom all creatures, yea, all possible creatures, are a mere nothing—because He is all-powerful, and nothing can resist His omnipotence— because His knowledge and wisdom are without limits —because He is faithful in all His words, just in all His ways, holy in all His works; because, in fine, whatever is beautiful, amiable, and lovely in all creatures, is but a faint image of the beauty, glory, and loveliness of God. The Seraphim surrounding His throne are not able to endure his brilliancy: "I have seen the Lord," cries out the Prophet Isaias, "sitting upon a throne; upon it stood the Seraphim, and they cried one to ano-

ther and said: Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of His glory." (Isaias, vi. 2.) Let us, then, dear children, practise this holy love of God, which His many perfections require from us, but let us practise it in a manner worthy of Him who is the object of it. Let us love God as He wishes to be loved by us—with our whole heart, our whole soul, with all our mind, and all our strength. Let us love God with *our whole heart*, by consecrating to Him all the affections of our heart—with *all our mind*, in consecrating to Him all the thoughts of our mind—with *our whole soul*, by consecrating to Him the use of all the powers of our soul—with *our whole strength*, by endeavouring to love Him every day more and more, so that all our thoughts, all our affections, all our desires, all our actions, should have no other end, but that of loving and pleasing Him.

17. "Charity," too, requires of us that we should "love our neighbours as ourselves." To love our neighbour as we love ourselves, is a precept strictly enjoined by God; and Christ Himself tells us that this love of our neighbour shall be a distinctive mark of our being His disciples. The love we owe our neighbour ought to have the same tendency and the same properties with the love which we have for ourselves. With regard to its tendency, we ought to have in view the real happiness of our neighbour both in this life, and in the life to come, because such is the tendency of the love which we have for ourselves. We must, therefore, wish him happy, as we wish our own happiness; we must carefully do for him, in order to make him happy, all those things that we should wish others should do for us, were we in his situation. We must, therefore, form the most favourable judgment of our neighbour—of his dispositions and of his actions; and where certain malice does not appear, we must always put the best construction we can upon them. We must, if we "love

our neighbours as ourselves," avoid all rash judgments, suspicions, and jealousies, and all uncharitable opinions and interpretations of our neighbours' dispositions and conduct.

18. We must not be content with barely wishing our neighbours well, but our love for them should be real, sincere, and *efficacious*—assisting them in their necessities, bestowing alms on them when in want; for the Scripture says: "He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him, how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth." (1 John, iii. 17.) And our blessed Saviour shows in the strongest terms the necessity of this real and efficacious love of our neighbour "for the love of God;" for when relating the sentence that shall be passed on the good and bad at the last day, He expressly declares that the sentence of eternal happiness shall be passed on the good, because the love they had for their neighbour was an efficacious love—relieving them in their necessities; and that the wicked shall be condemned to eternal woe, because their love for their neighbour was *not* efficacious: "I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink."

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE VENDEAN SOLDIER'S GREAT FAITH IN GOD.

A Vendean, named Repoche, who, during the French Revolution, served in the royal army, having been taken prisoner by the revolutionary party, was conducted by them to a place where a cross had been erected, and there he was thus accosted: "You have been taken with arms in your hands, and so your life is forfeited. There yonder is the cottage in which you were born; your father is still living there; now your life will be spared to you, if you will do one

thing." The Vendean cast a look at his cottage, and the tears flowed down his cheeks. "What must I do," said he, "in order that my life be spared?" A soldier of the Republic made answer: "Take up that axe, and at once cut down that cross." Repoche took up the axe; his fellow-prisoners turned aside their heads, and trembled, for they thought that Repoche was about abjuring his God. Repoche, brandishing the axe over his head, sprung on the pedestal of the cross, and, uplifting his arm, cried out in tones loud enough to be heard by even those who were at a distance from the spot: "Death to him who shall insult the cross of Jesus Christ! I shall defend it from ignominy to my last breath!" With his back to the sacred wood, he swung the axe around, his eyes brilliant with a divine fire, and his frame endued by supernatural strength. For some minutes he succeeded in warding off the sacrilegious soldiers, but soon he was overwhelmed with numbers; and though transfixed in every part of his body, he still clung fast to the cross. The savages, in human form, unloosed his arms from around it, laid him prostrate on the pedestal, and pointing their bayonets to his heart, they again said to him: "Cut down this emblem of superstition, and you shall live." "That is the emblem of redemption," cried out the Vendean, "and I will still hold on to it." And by a final effort he again flung his arms around the cross, and entwined them closely about it, and in this position was put to death. What faith! what intrepidity!

JOB CONSOLED BY THE HOPE OF A FUTURE RESURRECTION.

There was a man, as we are told in the Scriptures, called Job and Job had seven sons and three beautiful daughters, and had also seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses. Job was very distinguished among the people of the East. Now, it happened that each of Job's sons gave a great feast, and to this feast the three sisters were invited. One day, when they were all enjoying the feast given by their eldest brother, a messenger came to Job, and said: Job, your oxen were ploughing, and your asses were feeding beside them, and, lo! the Sabines rushed in and took your oxen and asses away, and what was more, they slew your servants with the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you. And he had scarcely announced the melancholy intelligence, when another messenger arrived, and said: Job, the fire of God fell from heaven, and, striking the sheep and the servants, hath consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you. And while this second messenger was speaking, a third rushed in and said: Job, the Chaldeans, in three troops, made an attack on your

camels, made away with them, and together with that, they put your servants to the sword, and I alone have escaped to bear you the sorrowful tidings. And to complete Job's affliction, a fourth messenger bolts in, and conveys to the poor father's ears this dismal tale: Job, your seven sons and your three beautiful daughters were enjoying themselves in the house of their eldest brother, when, oh, sad news! a violent wind came suddenly rushing on from the side of the desert, and it shook the four corners of the house, and the house fell upon thy seven sons and three daughters, and they perished in the ruins, and I alone have escaped to tell you the sad story. But this was not all. In some time after, poor Job was struck by a very grievous ulcer, from the sole of his foot, even to the top of his head, and he patiently went out and sat on a dunghill, and taking up a potsherd he began to scrape off the putrid and filthy matter. And his wife seeing him in that sad plight, said to him: Bless God, Job, and die. Job answered: What art thou at, poor foolish woman? Do you not know, that if we receive good things from the hands of God, we should, too, receive evil. And soon Job's friends came to see him, and they reproved and reproached him, by telling him that he himself was the cause of all the afflictions that were poured down on him. But Job's hope in God bore him up under the charges made against him; and he consoled himself under his afflictions, by the expectation of future happiness: "For," said he, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth; and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall behold my God."—*Job.*

THE CURATE AND HIS HEROIC LOVE OF HIS NEIGHBOUR.

Some years since a young ecclesiastic, curate of a parish lying along the banks of the Lot, in the neighbourhood of Villeneuve d'Ageu, bequeathed to his country an example of one of the most heroic achievements. The Patron day of the place was being observed, and the entire population of the surrounding country were assembled to join in its celebration. The rains of the previous day had swollen the river, and it rushed madly onward in its course. As the priests were chanting vespers, piercing cries suddenly burst on their ears—"A boat has been upset! the men are floating down the river!" The young curate, without a moment's delay, hurries to the church-door, takes off his sacerdotal vestments, lays aside his suitan, and, without attending to the danger, surrenders himself up to the mercy of the waves, in order to save the wretched victims, who were yet struggling to keep themselves above water. He wrestled with the flood—his efforts are crowned with success; and he

brings back the half-drowned men, one after the other, amidst the acclamations of the people, who were witnesses of the terrific scene. This heroic deed accomplished, the worthy and virtuous ecclesiastic quietly returned to the church, and resumed the office which had been for the time interrupted. This delightful act of heroism was not long without its reward, for he was presented by the government with a gold medal.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. How many sorts of virtues are there?
2. Are the three divine virtues necessary for salvation?
3. What means the virtue of faith?
4. Does faith require that we should believe all that God has taught?
5. On whom can we depend for the truth of what God has taught?
6. On what is our faith founded?
7. In what way do we honour God by faith?
8. What do you mean by hope in general?
9. What do you understand by the virtue of hope?
10. Mention the various grounds of our hope.
11. Are the merits of Christ good grounds for hope?
12. In what manner do we honour God by hope?
13. Explain fully the meaning of the virtue of charity.
14. In what way should we love God above everything else?
15. What do you understand by loving God for His own sake?
16. What should be the motives of our love for God?
17. In what way are we commanded to love our neighbour?
18. Does charity require of us that we should relieve our neighbour in his necessities?

PRACTICE.

1. Never forget that divine faith is the foundation of every Christian virtue, and is so necessary, that without it there is no salvation.

2. Ever hope in God; place all your confidence in Him, and for this, often call to mind His goodness, His promises, and the merits of Jesus Christ.

3. Recollect, that in loving God and your neighbour, you fulfil the law.

PRAYER.

We have now been taught, O God! the meaning of the three great and divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity. We give Thee thanks for so important and necessary an instruction, and promise Thee that we shall ever strive so to regulate our lives, that every action, word, and thought of ours shall proceed from a lively faith, a firm hope, and an ardent charity. Grant, dear Lord, that we may always openly profess our faith, and never be ashamed of Thee and Thy word, that we may always repose with confidence in Thee, and love Thee here and hereafter. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

Q. Why should we love God above all for His own sake?

A. Because God alone is infinitely good and perfect.

1, The reason, dear children, that we "should love God above all for His own sake" is, that He is infinitely good," and in every way "perfect." The heart loves whatever is good and perfect; and necessarily loves it. Wherever goodness is found we love it, though we derive no advantages from it, and though it confers on us no other pleasure than that of loving it. But God "is infinitely good." He is the very source of everything that possesses goodness. Everything good, delightful, beautiful, and amiable in created things, flows from the goodness and beauty of God. Yes, dear children, every good quality, every perfect gift comes from God. The glory and brightness of the sun is only a ray of the glory and brightness of God. God is the source of everything grand, glorious, delightful, and

good, in this world. He possesses goodness and amiability in all their perfection.

2. The beauty and goodness of created things, no matter how excellent, is still faulty and imperfect; but the beauty, goodness, and all the other amiable qualities of God, are faultless, and without the slightest mixture of imperfection. His beauty is infinite and eternal; His goodness and His patience are not attended with weakness; nor is His justice accompanied with passion. He alone is mighty without ostentation; wise without vanity; omnipotent without pride. He alone can do everything without the least effort, and can provide for the wants of the world without uneasiness. And it is on account of this infinite goodness of God that "we love Him above all."

3. If we raise up our thoughts to heaven, and contemplate, with the angels and saints, this God of glory, what a grand spectacle! See how inflamed with love for Him are all these happy spirits! They wish for a thousand hearts, that the affections of all these hearts may be consecrated to Him. Every moment they are engaged paying homage to His infinite perfections. Holy, Holy, Holy, they ever sing out. He is truly to them a goodness, a beauty, always ancient, and ever new, as St. Augustin has said. But this is the very God who is proposed for our love, and whom we are commanded to love; and because this God is infinitely "good and perfect," we should "love Him above all."

4. Another reason why we should love God is, that He is infinitely good to us, and gives us the most endearing proofs of the greatness of His love, in the numberless benefits He has bestowed, and is daily bestowing upon us, and in what He has prepared for us in the kingdom of His glory. To Him we are indebted for everything that we are and have. Having no need at all of us, He has made us and given us a soul, that we may love Him here and hereafter in heaven. Every

day He is showering down favours on us. In our mother's womb He was watching us, and He brought us safe into the world; and then by holy Baptism He washed us from sin, and brought us up in His knowledge, and taught us by His priests the sacred mysteries of religion, and the great truths of eternity; and, beyond thousands, He has favoured us with opportunities of good, and bestowed on us graces in abundance, and has such a loving care of us, as if we alone, of all in the world were the objects of His love. How highly favoured are we by this election! what singular privilege is here shown us! How great, then, must be our obligation to the Almighty for all that He has bestowed upon us? Our being, our members, our senses, our powers, our faculties, our understandings to know Him, our hearts to love Him, our memories, our powers of speech, and, in short, everything we are and have, belong to Him. What return of gratitude can we make Him that could bear the slightest proportion to what we owe Him? Let us, at least, make Him all the return we can, by loving Him with our whole heart, soul, and mind.

Q. How are we to love God above all?

A. By loving Him more than ourselves, and more than anything in this world; and by being disposed to sacrifice everything that is most dear to us, even our very lives, if necessary, rather than offend Him.

5. As God is infinitely good, He should have the first place in our thoughts and affections—in our esteem and love. We should place our supreme happiness in Him; and our attachment to Him should be so firm, that no creature, nor any temporal consideration, ought to be able to separate us from Him. We must love God "more than ourselves;" that is, we must be

willing to make a sacrifice of our lives, when the doing so is necessary on any occasion for preserving His love and friendship. God must be loved "more than anything in the world"—more than riches or property, or health, or friends, or relatives; and we must be "disposed to sacrifice everything"—comforts, joys, satisfactions, delights, house and home, "and everything that is most dear to us, even our very lives," sooner than be guilty of offending Him by sin. "He," says Christ, "that loveth father and mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me." (Matt. x. 37.)

6. This love of preference we all are obliged to have for God, as it is absolutely necessary for salvation. For if there be anything that we love more than God, so as to be willing in our hearts to commit a mortal sin rather than part with that thing, we can never, while we are so disposed, be the friends of God. Examples of this love of preference we find in all the saints and servants of God. This was the love that Abraham had for God, when he not only left "his country and his kindred, and his father's house," but was ready to sacrifice his son, his only beloved son Isaac, in order to please God. Such was the love of St. Paul, who "suffered the loss of all things, and counted them as dung that he might gain Christ." (Phil. iii. 8.) Such also should be our dispositions. And what is more just and right than that we should love and prefer God before everything else? Is He not our Creator, our Lord, and our God; and so, has He not, as such, a perfect right to demand what belongs to Him? Do not kings demand and expect to be honoured by their subjects, as kings? And is it not just that God should demand to be honoured as God? But to honour Him as God, is nothing else than to love Him more than ourselves, and more than anything in the world.

Q. Should we often make acts of faith, hope, and charity?

A. Yes; and particularly when we come to the use of reason, and at the hour of death; also when we are tempted to sin, or have sinned against these divine virtues; and when we prepare ourselves to receive any sacrament.

7. We are all obliged to make acts of faith, hope, and charity, "when we come to the use of reason," because at that time we are bound to turn ourselves towards God, and propose Him to ourselves as our last end. And what more delightful use can be made of the first moment of our reason, than in making an acknowledgment to God that we believe His word, that we hope in His promises, and that we love Him with our whole hearts?

8. "At the hour of death" we should also make acts of these divine virtues; for, as at that moment the enemy of our salvation redoubles his attacks in order to lead us to damnation, and tries in every way to destroy our faith, hope, and love for God, we must wrestle with him, and oppose to his temptations a lively faith, a firm hope, and an ardent charity. At the moment of our last struggle with Satan, we should recall to our minds these words of the Apostle St. John: "And this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith" (1 John, v. 4); and cry out with David, "As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters: so my soul panteth after Thee, O God." (Psalm xli. 1.)

"When we are tempted to sin, or have sinned against these divine virtues," we are particularly bound to make acts of faith, hope, and charity; for making acts of these virtues is making acts of resistance to the temptations by which we are assaulted—is a declaration that we abhor and detest those sins with which we have been tempted, or have actually committed, and is,

besides, the most effectual means of putting the tempter to flight.

9. "When we prepare ourselves to receive any sacrament," we should make acts of faith, hope, and charity, testifying that God is the author of the sacrament that we are about receiving; that we expect, on account of His infinite mercy and goodness, graces, gifts, and heavenly blessings from its reception; that we love Him, are prepared to sacrifice everything sooner than offend Him, and that our wishes and desires are that every hour and every moment of our lives should be spent in praising, blessing, and loving Him. But, dear children, let us not be content with making these acts of virtue at the particular times above-mentioned; let us be careful to make them at least once a day, and let us make an act of charity more frequently. Know that he who does not acquire the love of God will scarcely persevere in the grace of God; for it is very difficult to renounce sin merely through fear of chastisement; and he who abstains from sin through such a motive, perseveres but a short time.

Q. In reciting the Creed, do we not make an act of faith, and an act of hope? and in saying the Lord's Prayer, do we not make acts of hope and charity?

A. We do make acts of faith, hope, and charity, by reciting the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

10. "We certainly are obliged," says Bergier, "to make acts of faith, hope, and charity, from time to time; but it is well that the faithful should be reminded that reciting the Creed is an 'act of faith;' that when they say, *I believe in life everlasting*, they make an 'act of hope;' and that when they say to God, in the Lord's Prayer, *hallowed be Thy name—Thy will be done*, they make an 'act of charity.' Prayer, in general, is a religious act—an act of confidence in God, and of submission to His providence."—*Dict. de Théologie.*

11. The author of the work, entitled, "*The Priest*

Sanctified," thus writes in reference to this subject:—"As far as the three acts of divine virtues are concerned, before pronouncing those unworthy of absolution who are ignorant of them, we should see if they know, at least, the 'Apostles Creed' and the 'Lord's Prayer,' and if they know and understand an act of contrition. In truth, the Creed is an excellent act of faith in all the mysteries which one is bound to believe, whether by *necessity of means*, or by *necessity of precept*. The 'Lord's Prayer' is one which includes hope; for we never ask favours of one in whom we have no hope. The word *Father* points out the grounds and motives of hope, which is the goodness of God. An act of contrition is an act of perfect charity. If, then, the penitent knows the 'Creed,' the 'Lord's Prayer,' and the 'act of contrition,' though he should not be able to repeat the acts of faith, hope, and charity, in the form in which they are now said, he is not unworthy of absolution. The present form of the 'acts of faith, hope, and charity,' has been in use only during the last one hundred and fifty years, and none who were born before the year 1720 ever heard them in the present form. Would you wish, then, to condemn all the faithful who lived before that year, and also their pastors, as having neglected what was necessary for justification and salvation?"—*Prêtre Sanctifie*, No. 28. Cardinal Gousset, Archbishop of Rheims, in his justification of the Moral Theology of St. Liguori, adopts the above view of the subject. Let us add, that he who has well learned the "Creed," the "Lord's Prayer," and the "act of contrition," will not have much difficulty in committing to memory, if he be desirous to do so, the "acts of faith, hope, and charity," in the form in which they are now said.

Q. Which of these divine virtues is the most perfect?
A. The most perfect of these divine virtues is charity.

12. Charity is the greatest of the three divine virtues, for three reasons:—1. Because it is the fulfilment of the whole law, which is reduced to this sole commandment—"You shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and thy neighbour as thyself, for the love of God." 2. Because it is the soul of all the other virtues, and because it is from charity that the others derive all their merit. "Though I should distribute all my goods to the poor," says St. Paul, "and though I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 3. Because it will for ever exist in heaven, whilst faith and hope shall be no more. Faith will have no place in heaven, because there we shall see unveiled, and face to face, that which we now believe without seeing or comprehending it. Hope, too, will have no place in heaven, because in heaven we shall be in full possession, and for ever be in the enjoyment of the sovereign good which we now desire and hope for.

Q. Are we obliged to make acts of charity more frequently than acts of faith and hope?

A. We certainly are.

13. In the book of Deuteronomy we are told, that we ought to meditate constantly on the precept of loving God: "Sitting in our house, walking on our journey, sleeping and rising; that we should bind it as a sign on our hands, keep it before our eyes, and write it in the entry and doors of our house." (Deut. vi. 7.) This passage from the sacred scripture signifies that we should continually endeavour to make acts of divine love. The reason is, because he who does not frequently exercise himself in loving God, can scarcely observe the divine law. Some theologians hold that we are bound to make an act of charity at least on every festival; others once a week; but we should, at least, make an act of divine love once a month. But it is right that

every Christian should make acts of faith, hope, and charity, every day.

14. As an inducement to do so, Pope Benedict XII. and Pope Benedict XIV. have granted to all the faithful, who devoutly recite these acts every day during a month, a plenary indulgence—which may be applied to the souls in purgatory—on the day in which they have confessed and communicated, provided they say the usual prayers required by the Church. There is also granted a plenary indulgence at the hour of death to all the faithful, who, during life, daily recited those acts; and an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines every time that we repeat them.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

ST. AUGUSTIN ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

"But what, then, is it that I love when I love Thee? Neither the beauty of the body, nor the graceful order of time, nor the brightness of light so agreeable to those eyes, nor the sweet melody of all sorts of music, nor the fragrant scent of flowers, oils, or spices, nor the sweet taste of manna or honey, nor fair limbs alluring to carnal embrace. None of these things do I love when I love my God. And yet, I love a certain light, and a certain voice, and a certain fragrancy, and a certain food, and a certain embrace, when I love my God—the light, the voice, the fragrancy, the food, and the embrace of my inward man. Where that shines to my soul, which no place can contain; and where that sounds, which no time can measure; and where that smells, which no blast can disperse; and where that relishes, which no eating can diminish; and where that is embraced, which no satiety can separate—this it is that I love when I love God. And what is this? I asked the earth, and it said, *It is not I.* I asked the sea, and the deep, and the living things thereof, and they answered we are not God: seek higher above us. I asked the fleeting air above; and the whole region of it, with its inhabitants, cried out, Anaximens *is mistaken, I am not God.* I asked the heavens, the sun, the moon, and the stars, *Neither are we,* said they, *the God whom thou seekest.* And I said to all these

things which stand around the doors of my flesh, you have told me concerning my God that you are not He, give me, at least, some tidings of Him, and they all cried out with a loud voice, *It is He that made us.*"

PROPERTIES OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

God the Father is love; God the Son is love; God the Holy Ghost is the love of the Father and the Son. This love requires a quality somewhat like it in ourselves: such a mutual affection, I mean, as may unite us to, and render us nearly related to itself. Love is a stranger to reserve and formality. He that loves approaches with confidence to God, and enters without fear or hesitation into familiar conversation with Him. He lives to no purpose who lives without loving God. But he that loves keeps his eyes always fixed upon God as the sole object of his desires and affections; he meditates upon Him, delights in Him, is fed and nourished by Him. A man thus inflamed by the love of God, sings His praises, reads His word, and conducts himself in all his actions with such care and circumspection, as if he saw with the eyes of the body God really present (as indeed He is present) with him in everything he says or does. He pours out his prayers as if he were wrapt up into heaven, and presented before the throne and majesty of Him "to whom thousands of thousands minister, and whom ten thousand times a hundred thousand" angels adore. When love visits the soul it awakes it out of its sleep; it is softened, instructed, and smitten with the shafts of love. This enlightens the soul in its darkness, opens that which was shut, inflames that which was frozen, calms angry, impatient, and rough dispositions, chases away vices, and subdues carnal affections, corrects the temper, reforms and renews the spirit of the inward man, checks the levities and inordinate passions of youth.—*St. Augustin.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Why is it that we should love God more than anything else?
2. Can anything except God be said to be altogether good and perfect?
3. In what manner is God loved by the angels and saints?
4. In what manner has God loved us?
5. What is the meaning of loving God above everything else?
6. Give one or two examples of those who loved God above all.
7. Should we make acts of faith, hope, and charity when we arrive at the use of reason?

8. At what other times should we make acts of faith, hope, and charity?

9. Should we make acts of the divine virtues when we are preparing to receive a sacrament?

10. Are Christians bound to have by heart the "Acts" in the form in which they are now said?

11. Do we make acts of the divine virtues in saying the Lord's Prayer and the Creed?

12. Why is charity the greatest of all the virtues?

13. Why should we make an act of charity oftener than an act of faith or hope?

14. What indulgences are granted to the recital of the acts of faith, hope, and charity?

PRACTICE.

1. Look upon charity as the life and principle of all the Christian virtues, and as a virtue which you should continually practise.

2. Often make acts of charity, particularly when you are exposed to the danger of offending God.

3. Frequently pray to God for the grace of His holy love, and beg of Him that you may live and die in His friendship and love.

PRAYER.

O God, the supreme and uncreated principle of good, we love Thee with our whole hearts. From this moment we devote ourselves to Thy service; and we earnestly desire to love and serve Thee, to the full extent of which our weakness is capable. Many favours have we requested of Thee, many more have we received; but there is one which we now most humbly crave in preference to all others, it is the gift of Thy holy love. Yes, Lord, it is what we earnestly ask—it is what we most firmly hope to receive from Thy fatherly goodness. Give us then the grace to love Thee, and to love Thee with all the powers of our soul—to love Thee purely for Thyself, and to love Thee to our latest breath: that when this mortal life shall end, we may then begin to love Thee with greater perfection, and with greater ardour, for evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE SINS AGAINST FAITH.

Q. What is forbidden by the first Commandment?

A. All sins against faith, hope, and charity, and other duties of religion.

1. All the vices that are opposed to the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and also to the virtue of religion, are condemned "by the first Commandment." These vices are, idolatry, superstition, despair, presumption, blasphemy, infidelity, sacrilege. They are grievous sins, and condemned in very severe terms by God; for, in announcing His first Commandment, He says that He is a mighty and jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him.

Q. How does a person sin against faith?

A. By not endeavouring to know what God has taught; by not believing what God has taught; and by not professing his belief in what God has taught.

2. A person sins against faith: "By not endeavouring to know what God has taught;" that is, by neglecting to be instructed in those truths of our religion which God has taught, and which we are bound to know. This sin of neglecting to learn the truths of our religion, which we are bound to know, is, alas! but too common

now-a-days. Many persons there are who have scarcely any idea of the most important and essential truths of religion, and take not the least trouble to learn them. And yet, living in ignorance of them is nothing less than renouncing salvation and eternal life, as Jesus Christ Himself has declared: "Now, this is eternal life," said our Lord, "that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." (John xvii. 3.)

3. We also sin against the first Commandment "by not believing what God has taught," which are all those articles of faith which God has revealed to the Church, and which the Church proposes to us to believe. We have all those revealed truths in the sacred scriptures, and in the traditions gradually communicated by God to His servants. But how should we be able to ascertain what are the true traditions and the true scriptures, and what is their meaning, if we had not the Church to teach us? This Church Jesus Christ has established as the pillar and ground of truth: "The Church of the living God," says St. Paul, "the pillar and ground of truth." (1 Tim. iii. 15.) Our Saviour Himself has promised that this Church shall never be conquered by her enemies: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her." (Mat. xvi. 18.) So necessary is the knowledge of the principal articles of our religion to every Christian, that the Church will not allow her ministers to confer sacraments on those who are ignorant of them. And more: if absolution be pronounced upon a penitent labouring under such ignorance, the absolution is null; that is, it produces no effect, and the sins remain unforgiven. "All Christians," says St. Liguori, "who are ignorant that there is one God, who will reward the good and punish the wicked—that the soul can never die—that there are Three Persons in God—that Jesus Christ, the Second Person, was born and died for us—cannot be absolved from their sins." There are some articles of our

faith, a belief in which is necessary as a *means* of obtaining salvation; that is, unless we believe these articles it is utterly impossible for us to be saved, though even our ignorance of them does not proceed from any fault on our part. There are other articles of our faith, the belief of which is necessary as a matter of *precept*, for salvation; insomuch, that if, through our own fault, this belief be wanting, we commit a mortal sin, which, without repentance, must deprive us of salvation: yet, if this want of knowledge be without any fault on our part, we may be saved without knowing them. The former are necessary as the essential means of salvation by God's appointment; the latter are necessary, because commanded. Now of the truths which God has taught, and which we are all bound to know, and expressly believe as a necessary means of salvation, when we come to the years of discretion, are the following:—

4. 1st—That "there is a God, and that He will reward the good and punish the wicked." This is in accordance with the words of St. Paul, for he says: "Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is a rewarder of them that seek Him." (Heb. xi. 6.) And the reason is clear, because if we do not know God, we can neither fear Him, nor hope in Him, nor love Him, nor obey Him, and consequently can never please Him. 2nd—That "God the Son was made man, was born of the Virgin Mary, died on a cross for our sins." That is, we must explicitly know Jesus Christ our Saviour, and that He was born and died for us. This belief Jesus Christ Himself has declared necessary, for He says: "This is eternal life, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." John xvii. 5.) The reason of the great necessity of this belief is this: that if we know not Jesus Christ, we can neither love Him nor follow Him as His disciples, nor obey Him; and the Scriptures declare: "If any man

love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (1 Cor. xvi. 22), that is accursed.

5. 3rd—That "there are three persons in one God," and the reason that the knowledge and belief in the *Trinity* is necessary as a means of salvation, is because the *Trinity* is the principal mystery of our faith, and the great object of our adoration, in the name of which we are all ordered by God to be baptized and instructed: "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Mat. xxviii. 19.) Again, how can we know that Jesus Christ is God the Son, and was conceived by the Holy Ghost, except we know that in God there is the Son, and of course, the Father and the Holy Ghost. Some authors hold that the belief of the Trinity of Persons, and the Incarnation of the Son, though strictly commanded, is not, however, necessary as a means, without which salvation cannot be gained; so that a person not ignorant of them through his own fault may be saved. But the general and best opinion is, that an explicit belief of these articles is necessary as a means without which no adult can be saved. Innocent XI., in a proposition condemned by him, declared that a person who is ignorant of the two mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation of Jesus Christ cannot be absolved.

6. Besides the four principal mysteries above-mentioned, we are obliged by precept, which binds under mortal sin, to believe the other articles of the "Apostles' Creed," at least the principal articles among them, such as, that God has created heaven and earth—that He preserves and governs the universe—that on the third day after His death, Jesus Christ rose from the dead by His own power—that He afterwards ascended into heaven, where He sits on the right hand of His Eternal Father. We are also bound to know and believe that on the last day we shall rise and be judged by Jesus

Christ. We, too, are required to believe that the Holy Catholic Church is the only true one. The belief in the "Communion of Saints"—that is, that all the faithful in the state of grace partake of all the merits of the saints, living and dead—is also necessary for every one of us. We must also believe in "the remission of sins" —that is, that our sins are forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance, provided we are sincerely penitent for them. In the last place, we must believe in "life everlasting" —that is, that he who is saved by dying in a state of grace shall go to heaven, where he will enjoy God for ever; and, on the other hand, that he who dies in sin shall go to hell, where he will be tormented for all eternity. Every Christian is bound also to believe the "Seven Sacraments" and their effects, particularly the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, the Blessed Eucharist, and also the other sacraments, when he has to receive them.

7. We also sin against the first Commandment "by not professing our belief in what God has taught." We are often obliged to make outward profession of our faith before men, and if we profess it not when so bound, we grievously sin against the first Commandment. Our Lord tells us in express terms, that whosoever shall be ashamed of Him and His words, in this sinful and adulterous generation, He, the Son of Man, shall also be ashamed of him, when He shall come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. (St. Luke, ix. 26.) To be ashamed to profess our belief in any part of "what God has taught," and to be unwilling to defend it, lest we should meet with the contempt or ridicule of worldly people, is a grievous affront to Jesus Christ—is a betrayal of our duty to Him—is preferring the vain opinion of men to His approbation—is, in a word, to be afraid more of man than of God, which is a thing severely condemned by Him, and for which He says that He will be ashamed of us at the last accounting day.

Q. Who are they who do not endeavour to know what God has taught?

A. Those who neglect to learn the Christian doctrine.

8. Our blessed Saviour commissioned His Apostles to teach all nations the great truths of the Gospel, and the observance of all those things which He had commanded them. And St. Paul declares that those who obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, shall suffer eternal punishment. (2 Thess. i. 8.) But as one cannot obey the Gospel without knowing it, every one is therefore obliged by this command to know the Gospel of Christ, at least as much of it as is necessary to spend a good Christian life, in that state in which God has placed him; and if we neglect to learn what is necessary for us in order to live as Christians, we sin against faith, for we "do not endeavour to know what God has taught."

9. Every Christian is therefore bound to know the Christian doctrine, or the great truths inculcated by Christ. 1. He should know the "Apostles' Creed," not only as to the words, but also the sense and substance of what is contained in that Creed. 2. "The Lord's Prayer;" because prayer is one of the principal duties of a Christian, and because Jesus Christ Himself has composed the "Lord's Prayer," and commands us when we pray to say that prayer, which He Himself taught and left to us, that we may know how to ask from Him the graces which are most necessary for our salvation. But if we do not *know* the Lord's Prayer, we cannot obey Christ's command of saying it. 3. We should know the "Ten Commandments of God, the Six Precepts of the Church, and the duties of our state of life;" because if we do not *know* the Ten Commandments, we cannot observe or keep them. But our Lord expressly declares that if we wish to enter into life ever-

lasting, we must "keep the Commandments;" therefore, we must learn and know them. The "duties of our state of life" must also be known by us; for without the performance of these duties we cannot save our souls: but how can we perform them if we know them not?

10. 4.—We should know the "Sacraments," and the nature and effects of them, particularly the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, the Eucharist, and the other sacraments, when one is going to receive them. Because the sacraments are the great means ordained by God to confer His grace on our souls, and as we are all obliged to receive several of them, at one time or other, and some of them very often, and that with proper dispositions, we therefore should know them, and the dispositions with which we should receive them. By the command and custom of the Church, we are all obliged to know *by heart* the words of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Ten Commandments, the Six Commandments of the Church, and how to make the sign of the Cross, or *bless ourselves.*

11. But if any persons are so gross and dull in their understandings, that it is next to impossible for them to learn and retain a knowledge of those truths mentioned above, which all are obliged to know because they are commanded to be known, such persons are exempted from that obligation, because, being naturally dull and stupid, they are incapable of satisfying it. But with regard to those truths which are required to be known as *a necessary means of salvation,* such as the Unity, Trinity, and Incarnation of God, *every adult* is bound to know them, because without knowing them, he cannot, as we have seen before, be saved. However, if some persons are utterly incapable of *retaining* those essential truths of salvation, it is sufficient for them, in order to satisfy this obligation, to make acts of faith in them, when they are explained to them.

12. It follows from what has been just explained to you, dear children, that all those who, through their own fault, are ignorant of those truths of salvation which they are obliged to know, and who, through neglect of learning them, live in habitual ignorance of the Christian doctrine, "do not endeavour to know what God has taught;" and not endeavouring to know what God has taught, they are living in the state of sin, and are every day in danger of committing sin, because they are ignorant of their duty through their own fault, and because they are in danger of abusing the sacraments when they receive any of them.

13. And not only are the parties ignorant guilty of sin, but parents, masters, and mistresses are equally so, if they neglect to teach their children and servants, either by themselves, if they are able, and if they are not able, by sending them to the public instructions given in church. Parents, masters, and mistresses, who do not oblige their children and servants—if ignorant of the truths, which they are bound to learn—to attend public instructions, should know, and shall find to their sad cost, that the ignorance of their children and servants regarding the duties of their religion, shall be laid at their doors, and that they will have a strict account to render of such neglect, on the last accounting day, at the tribunal of Christ.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE SAD EFFECTS OF GOING AWAY FROM INSTRUCTIONS.

St. Alphonsus tells us that a little girl lived in a certain town, and went every day to the convent school to be instructed in her religion. One morning, after breakfast, as she was going along the street which leads to the convent, a wicked boy met her, and persuaded her not to go to the convent on that day, but to accompany himself into the

country, and that they would have a great deal of amusement in the fields, as the morning was so fine. They stayed in the fields all the morning, and before they returned home they committed a mortal sin, a sin that deserved hell-fire. When they entered the town, the little boy went to his home, and the little girl went home also. The little girl did not tell her father and mother where she had been all day. She sat down and eat her dinner as usual. In the evening she felt unwell, and was put to bed. Next morning she was worse. It happened that a woman, one of the neighbours, came into the house. As soon as the woman had seen the child, she said to the mother: "For God's sake send directly for the priest, your child is dying." One of the brothers was sent off in haste to call the priest. When the boy came to the priest's house, he found that the priest was not at home; he was gone a long way off to see sombody else who was sick, and so the priest was not able to come before the child died. The paleness of death was already on the child's face. Death was coming on fast. It might be about a quarter of an hour before it died. The mother was standing at the window, looking out anxiously to see was the priest coming. Suddenly the mother heard the little child scream. She ran to the bed-side, and found the child sitting up in bed. "My poor child," said the mother, "what is the matter? who did you scream?" The little girl lifted up her finger and pointed to one side of the bed and said: Look there, mother, do you not see them." "No," said the mother, "I do not see anything." Then the child pointed again, and said: "There mother, there they are, the black people, they are standing close to me." Again the child screamed. Then the mother said: "My poor child, do not mind the black people; the priest will soon come, and he will send the black people away." The mother went back to the window to watch for the priest. She had been there only a few minutes, when there was another most frightful scream. The mother ran quickly to the bed-side. It was frightful to see the poor thing. She was sitting up as before, but she did not look into her mother's face any more. Her eyes, which seemed like two fire-balls, were fixed on something she was looking at near the bed-side. The mother laid her hand on the forehead of the child. She could feel the blood beating against it in the inside. Still the child did not look at its mother. It neither stirred nor spoke. The mother knew not what to think. She remained silent. Suddenly the little child turned its head round, and looking up into its mother's face, screamed out: "O mother! the black people have came back again; there they are, they speak to me, they tell me that they are the devils, and that they are come to fetch my poor soul to hell!" As soon as the little girl had said these words, she fell back on her pillow. Her mother looked into her face, and she was dead!

ST. FRANCIS AND THE WICKED CATHERINE.

St. Francis once gave a great mission in the town of Naples. Several nights before the mission began, he went round through the streets, to every house. He knocked at each door as he went along, and when it was opened, he said: "Please, for the love of God, to come to the mission." In a certain house in one of the streets, there was living a very wicked woman whose name was Catherine. St. Francis came to the door of Catherine's house, and when it was opened he said: "Please, for the love of God, to come to the mission." But Catherine had no desire to be instructed in her religion, or to reform her life, and she answered and said: "No. I will not come to the mission." St. Francis left the house, and went on his way. The next evening, St. Francis came again to Catherine's house, and knocked at the door. The door was opened. "How is Catherine?" said St Francis. "Catherine!" a voice answered—"Catherine is dead!" "Then," said St. Francis, "let us go up stairs and see the dead body." They all walked up stairs, and went into a room where a dead body was laid on a bed. It was the dead body of the wicked Catherine, who would not go to be instructed in the truths of her religion, and the night before said: "I will not go to the mission." They stood round the dead body. St. Francis stood in front of it, and looked at the pale body which had no life in it; then he said, with a loud voice: "O, Catherine Catherine, tell me in the name of God, I command you to tell me where are you—where is your soul?" A moment passed, and that cold dead body opened its mouth, and the dead tongue moved in the inside of the mouth, and that dead tongue answered the question of St. Francis, and said in a frightful voice: "I am in hell." Poor Catherine! she lived many years, and committed many dreadful mortal sins; still the good God did not send her to hell. Then St. Francis came to her from God, and he asked her to listen to him, and go receive instruction and be converted; and the answer he received was: "No, I will not listen, nor will I be instructed." And that refusal had not been long given when God sent her soul to hell.

THE GOOD EFFECTS OF EARLY INSTRUCTION.

A child about seven years old, was one day importuned by the prefect, Aslepiad, to renounce his faith. The child rejected at once the proposal of the prefect, and said that he had been taught by his mother the truths of religion, and that he would always profess them. The tyrant sent at once for the mother, and ordered her child to be scourged in her presence. And the child was scourged until his little body was one wound. The spectators were so moved at the cruel

sight, that they shed tears: but the mother congratulated herself on the strength of mind manifested by her son in boldy professing the truths which she had taught him, in spite of the lash. The child complained of thirst, and asked a little water: "My dear," said the mother to him, "have a little patience, and you will soon be satiated in heaven, with never ending joys." The prefect was fired with rage at the view of such heroism, and ordered the child's head to be cut off.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What are the vices forbidden by the first Commandment?
2. What do you mean by not endeavouring to know what God has taught?
3. What are the principal doctrines necessary to be believed?
4. What are the articles necessary to be believed as a means of salvation?
5. Is the Trinity necessary to be believed as a means of salvation?
6. What articles are necessary to be believed as a matter of precept?
7. Is is a great sin not to profess our faith openly?
8. Are we commanded to know the principal truths of the Gospel?
9. What truths in particular are we bound to know?
10. Are we bound to know all the sacraments?
11. Will natural stupidity excuse persons for not knowing what they should know as a matter of precept?
12. Are persons ignorant of the truths of salvation, living in the state of sin?
13. Are parents, masters, and mistresses, accountable for the ignorance of those under their care?

PRACTICE.

1. Ever remember that a Christian's principal duty is to learn to know God and what God has taught.
2. Never be ashamed, no matter how old you be, to attend at catechism, for you are always obliged to know the principal mysteries.
3. By attending to catechetical instructions, we shall learn what we are bound to know.

PRAYER.

We have just been taught, O God! the necessity of knowing Thee and Thy Son, and the other principal truths of our holy religion. We thank Thee for this instruction so necessary and important; and we promise Thee that in future we shall apply ourselves with care to obtain that knowledge of Thee and what Thou has taught—a knowledge so essential, that without it we can never be saved. Assist us, O Jesus! in the performance of the resolution we have now made, and grant that we may ever be learned and wise unto salvation. Amen.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON HERESY AND INFIDELITY.

Q. Who are they who do not believe in what God has taught?

A. Heretics and Infidels.

1. Those who do not believe in what God has taught and revealed to His Church, are called "Heretics and Infidels." A Heretic is one who though making a profession of Christianity, yet maintains with contumacy an error opposed to faith and condemned by the Church—refuses to believe any particular truth which *he knows* is declared by the Church to be a revealed truth, and thus preferring his own private judgment to her testimony—choosing for himself what to believe and what not to believe, in opposition to the teaching of that Church. Such a man is a Heretic, and the sin he is guilty of by doing so is called *heresy*. The word "*Heresy*" is derived from the Greek, and signifies choosing or adhering to a certain thing.

2. To constitute a *Heretic*, three conditions are required. First, he must profess the doctrines of Christianity, and in this respect a Heretic differs from a Jew and from an Idolater. Secondly, he must refuse to believe a truth revealed by God, and proposed, as so revealed, by the Church; for it is not enough that the truth be an article of faith, and that it be revealed and contained in the Word of God, but it is furthermore required that the *Church should have declared* that such a truth is revealed, and should have proposed it for belief as an article of faith. Thirdly, there is required *contumacy*, or an *obstinate* adhesion to error. "All those," says St. Augustin, "who hold dangerous opinions, are not on that account considered heretics; those only are heretics, who having been reprimanded, still obstinately persist in their opinions, and endeavour to obtain for them belief." From this it follows, that good faith—simplicity—ignorance—a will of laying aside error, if it were known as such, excuses one from the crime of heresy.

3. "Heretics," by not believing all and every one of the truths which God has taught, are guilty of a grievous sin. For, in the first place, by refusing to believe any of the truths of faith, they insult Almighty God Himself; for God has given us a Church, which, according to His promise, can never deceive us, and has commanded us to receive from her all divine truths. Whoever, therefore, refuses to believe any truth on the authority of the Church, must either suppose God to be false to His promises, or that He commands us to believe a falsehood. He rejects the testimony which God has established of Himself, and makes God, as it were, a liar. In the second place, "Heretics" destroy the very foundation of the Christian religion. God has left us no rule except the Church, by which we can know with certainty what the truths are which He has revealed; but if the Church be supposed to teach

what is false in any point of doctrine—as she is supposed to do by all those who reject her teaching—there can be no certainty of her teaching truth on any other point, and, therefore, we can never know with any *certainty* even a single revealed truth; and as a necessary consequence, all divine faith must be destroyed. Do we not know from the history of all heresies, that those who have thrown off the authority of the Church, have not only separated from her, but soon fell headlong into Deism or open impiety, and rejected the Christian revelation altogether?

4. In the third place, "Heretics" are the great source of disunion among all Christians; for wherever they are found, jars and dissensions reign. For as the Church is the only authority on which we can rely for the *certainty* of those truths which Christ has revealed, if this authority be thrown aside, and every person be allowed to think as he pleases on matters of religion, there can be no agreement among Christians. Every one will consider that he has as good a right to follow his own private opinion, as his neighbour has to follow his, and so everything will be regulated according to fancy or opinion.

5. The sin of heresy is condemned by the Scriptures in the strongest language. "A man," says St. Paul, "that is a *heretic*, after the first and second admonition, avoid: knowing that he, who is such an one, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgment." (Tit. iii. 10.) And St. John declares that submission to the teaching of the pastors of the Church, is a sign that we belong to God, and that by it the Spirit of truth is known from the spirit of error. "He that knoweth God," says he, "heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; by this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error." (1 John, iv. 6.) St. Paul again says: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have

preached to you, let him be anathema;" that is, accursed; and he repeats it a second time, that he may make a deeper impression on the minds of the Galatians: "As we said before, so now I say again, if any one preach to you a gospel besides that which you have received, let him be anathema." (Gal. i. 8, 9.) Paul also classes *sects* or *heresies* among the works of the flesh, of which he declares, "that they who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God." (Gal. i. 29.)

Q. By what name is the author of a heresy called?

A. The author of a heresy is called a heresiarch.

6. In the literal sense of the word, "heresiarch" means the father of a heresy, the chief of a heretical sect, for the word is derived from two Greek words, *αιρεσις*, heresy, and *αρχός*, chief. The first, the principal, and so to speak, the father of all heresiarchs, and of all heretics, next to Satan, had been Simon, surnamed the Magician, who, after having been baptized by Philip the deacon, and witnessing the miraculous powers conferred on the laity by the imposition of the hands of the Apostles, and desirous to be vested with the same powers as the Apostles had been, offered them money to purchase the gift. Having been warmly reprimanded by St. Peter, he renounced the Christian faith, and endeavoured to pass himself off as a new Messiah. After Simon Magus, Cerinthus rose up, who had the audacity frequently to oppose the Apostles, and asserted the necessity of observing all the ceremonies of the Law of Moses. He published false revelations, which he pretended were made to him by an angel, and taught that after the resurrection, Jesus Christ would reign on earth, with his elect, during a thousand years; and that they would enjoy for that space of time every sensual pleasure and delight. It is on this account that the supporters of that error are called *Millenarians*.

7. Then came Ebion and the Ebionites, who walked in the footsteps of tho early heresiarchs. They added to the doctrines of the Christian religion, the practices of the Old Law; they observed the Saturday as the Sunday; admitted only the Gospel of St. Matthew; and maintained that there were two powers rulling all things, Christ and the devil, that the latter ruled the present world, and that Christ would rule over the world to come. They strictly enjoined marriage on all persons; looked on animal food as impure, and never ate of it. To the Ebionites succeeded the Nicholaites, who admitted promiscuous intercourse with married and single. They also asserted that the Father of Jesus Christ was not the Creator of the world. Such were the heresies by which the Church was assailed in the first two centuries; and in succeeding ages many others sprung up which are recorded in the history of the Church.

Q. Why has God permitted that the faith of the Church should be thus ever assailed by so great a number of heresies?

A. He has permitted it for the advantage of the Church itself.

8. We can with truth say, that heresies are in a certain sense more injurious to the Church, than the persecutions of tyrants; for to persecutions a great number of saints and martyrs are indebted for their crowns; whilst heresies have been the cause, and are every day the cause, of the loss of many souls. God, however, permits them, because He knows how to draw good from evil; and it is in this sense that St. Paul has said that "needs there must be heresies," as indeed there had been from the very age of the Apostles, and as indeed there will be to the end of the world.

9. But to what purpose do heresies tend? 1. They try the belief of the faithful in times of trouble and seduction, when the love of novelty, the sophisms made use of, the contagion of evil example, and the influence of

self-interest, are so many temptations by which God tries those who are weak in faith and those who are strong, in order to reward the latter, and reject the former from the bosom of His Church, as the fan separates the good grain from the chaff. 2. To render more clear the truths of faith, either by the new light shed by Catholic theologians, on the articles impugned by heretics, or by the formal decisions of the Church, which irrevocably fix whatever is necessary to be believed. 3. Heresies serve to humble the mind of man, and to lower his pride, as they convey a lesson to him of distrusting his own lights, and adhering, as to matters of faith, to whatever the Church has decided. Such, according to the Fathers, are the advantages which the Church draws from heresies. But woe to those, who, by their indocility and obstinacy, become the instruments which God makes use of to obtain these advantages!

01. "They who do not believe in what God has taught," are, too, called "Infidels." Infidel means one who has no faith. And so, unbelivers, heretics, and all those who reject any point of Catholic belief, are, in a certain sense, "infidels." But the word *infidel* is applied in particular to those who have not been baptized, and who believe not in God or in Jesus Christ, His Son. Children who have not received baptism, idolaters and pagans, who adore not the one true God, but pay divine honours to idols, are called "Infidels." Turks are also "Infidels," for although they believe in one God, they have no belief in Jesus Christ. They pay honour to a false prophet called Mahomet, from whom they take the name of Mahometans. They distinguish themselves from others by the name of Mussulman, which in the Turkish tongue means a true believer.

11. "Infidels" are divided into *positive* and *negative*. Negative Infidels are all those to whom the faith has not been made so known as to induce them to believe. *Positive* Infidels are those to whom the faith has been

announced sufficient for belief, but who, through contempt or negligence, have not embraced it. The latter are accountable for their unbelief, and are guilty of sin, for it is clear that an Infidel cannot with impunity reject the light that heaven sheds before his eyes. But with regard to those who are negatively unbelievers, the same thing cannot be said, for the Church has condemned this proposition of Baius: "Infidelity purely negative in those to whom Jesus Christ has not been announced' is a sin."

Q. What will be the future lot of Infidels?

A. The future fate of Infidels will depend on the degree of knowledge which they had together with the degree of malice with which they sinned.

11. Infidels are out of the Church, and without the Church there is no salvation. What, then, will be their fate hereafter? Shall they be condemned to hell to suffer the eternal torments of the damned? It is calculated that half the human race die before they have attained the use of reason; and in that case half the number of Infidels are similarly circumstanced as children who have died without Baptism. But with regard to children who die without being baptized, St. Augustin thus speaks: "I do not say that children dying without Baptism will be punished so severely, that it would be better had they never been born. Although I am not able to pronounce what and how great their damnation will be, I dare not, however, say that it would be better for these children not to exist at all, than to be in that state." (St. Aug. Contra Julian, lib. v., cap. 11.) Thus, St. Augustin will not prevent us from holding the opinion that the state of these children is such, that existence is considered by them better than not to exist at all, and that their existence is a good, the preservation of which they desire.

13. With regard to adult *Infidels*, if they could not arrive at a knowledge of the Gospel, they will not be

judged by the law of the Gospel, but according to the law of conscience. They will be punished only for the faults which they could have avoided, and not for their want of faith; and God will mete out their punishment in proportion to their lights of knowledge and their malice. "In the judgment of God there will be," says the great Bourdaloue, "a very great difference between a Pagan to whom the Christian law had been unknown, and a Christian who, having had a knowledge of that Law, inwardly renounced it; and God, following the laws of His justice, shall treat one very differently from the other We will know that a Pagan, to whom the Law of Jesus Christ had not been announced, will not be judged by that Law, and that God will observe in His regard the laws of equity, and will not condemn him precisely for the non-observance of a law which had not been made known to him. This is the doctrine taught by St. Paul in formal terms, in his Epistle to the Romans when he says: "For whosoever have sinned without the law, shall perish without the law." (Rom. ii. 12.)

12. The Christian revelation is a positive law, and it is the nature of a positive law not to bind until it shall be published and known. Therefore, if an Infidel be found condemned at the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge, it will be only for the violation of that inward law manifested to him by conscience, which he ought and could have known. "But if God," says Mgr. Frayssinous, "does not judge the unbeliever according to the Christian law; if He do not punish him for his want of faith; if He only punishes him for the transgressions which he could have avoided; if the punishment to be dealt upon him, be in proportion to his lights and to his malice, where is the injustice? I will not place that unbeliever in the kingdom of heavenly glory; but according to his merits He will more or less approximate, as to his eternal fate, children who die without Baptism."

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE HERETICS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Jean Jacques Rousseau thus describes the chief heretics of his day: "They no longer know what they believe, what they think, or what they say. If we ask them if Jesus Christ be God, they give no answer. If we ask what are the mysteries they admit, again, no answer will they give. Their interests in this world is the only thing that decides their faith. We cannot say what they believe or what they believe not. Assailing the faith of others, they consider as confirming their own." Again, he says: "What man was ever more imperious, more *divinely infallible* than Calvin, who looked upon opposition as the work of Satan, and a crime which made one deserve to be burned alive." Calvin, during life, was accused of shockingly immoral practices, and it was said he bore the penal mark of his immorality. A disciple of his own says: "Calvin ended his life in despair, . . of that shameful and loathsome disease with which God threatens the rebellious and accursed." "This, I can attest, as I saw *with my own eyes* his dreadful and tragical end." "God," says the German Lutherans, "manifested His judgments on Calvin, whom He visited horribly by punishments before his unhappy death. He so struck the heretic, that despairing of salvation and invoking devils, swearing and blaspheming, he breathed forth his malignant soul."—(Conrad Schlus.) According to Cobbett, the world, in any age, had never seen such a pack of vile miscreants as Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, Beza. There was not one of them that was not addicted to the most shameful vices. Luther said of Zuinglius and his book, that he did not read the books of such men as he, as they were not only damned themselves, but were bringing other miserable wretches to perdition.

THE PROPHET MAHOMET.

Mahomet, the founder of the impious sect of Mahometanism, was born in Arabia, in 568, and his family was amongst the most illustrious of that Peninsula. His uncle put him to trade on the death of his father, and when twenty-eight years of age, he became, at first, the factor and soon after the husband of a rich and noble widow called Cadijah. Mahomet was brought up an idolater; but as he grew old he determined, not alone to change his own religion, but that of his countrymen, who for the greater part were idolaters also, and to teach them, as he said, the ancient religion of Adam, of Abraham,

of Noah, and of the Prophets, of whom he allowed Jesus Christ to be one. He pretended to have long conversations with the Archangel Gabriel, in the Cave of Hera, three miles from Mecca, where he frequently retired. In the year 608, being then forty years of age, he began to give out that he was a prophet inspired by God, and he persuaded his relatives and domestics of it first, and then began publicly to preach in Mecca, and attack idolatry. At first, the people did not very willingly listen to him, and asked him to prove his mission by a miracle; but he told them that God sent him to preach the truth, and not to work miracles. The impostor, however, boasted of having worked one, though a very ridiculous one. A piece, he said, fell off from the moon once into his sleeve, and he fixed it on again; and this circumstance, it is said, induced the Mahometans to adopt the half moon as the device of their empire. He composed the Koran (*Al Koran*), assisted, as some think, by Sergius, a monk. It is a collection of precepts taken from the Mosaic and Christian law, together with many of his own, and interspersed with fables and ridiculous revelations. The Mahometans shave the head and leave only a lock of hair on the crown, by which they hope Mahomet will take them up to heaven, even out of hell itself. They are permitted to have four wives by their law, and they ought at least to have one. They may divorce each wife twice. Mahomet, after subjecting almost the whole of Arabia to his sway, died in 631, in the sixty-third year of his age.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What do you mean by the words heretic and heresy?
2. What is required to constitute a heretic?
3. How do you prove that heresy is a grievous sin?
4. Is heresy a source of discord among Christians?
5. What do the scriptures say of heresy?
6. Who were the first heresiarchs?
7. What were the heresies of the Ebionites and Nicholaites?
8. Are heresies to be greatly deplored?
9. Do many advantages arise from heresies?
10. Whom do you mean by infidels?
11. Who are called positive and who negative infidels?
12. What will be the future lot of children who die without baptism?
13. What judgment will be passed on adult infidels?
14. Will every infidel be judged according to the law of the Gospel?

PRACTICE.

1. Always maintain the teachings of the Church, and swerve not from a single point of her doctrine.

2. Whatever fault is found with any of the doctrines of the Church, never seemingly assent to it by your silence.

3. Always thank God that you have been born and brought up in the truths of Christianity.

PRAYER.

O God! what thanks should we return Thee for bringing us up in the bosom of the Catholic Church, and preserving us through life from the contamination of heresy. Many have been left in the darkness of infidelity, but we, O Lord, through Thy great mercy, have been born of Christian parents, and have been in our early years instructed in Thy saving truths. Grant, O Jesus! that our lives may never belie our faith, and that, whilst professing the doctrines of the true Church, we may always perform the duties which it requires from us. Amen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH.

Q. Who are they who sin against faith, by not professing their belief in what God has taught?

A. All those who, by any outward act, profession, or declaration, deny the true Religion or Church in which they inwardly believe.

1. It is not enough, dear children, to believe in the heart the truths of faith; we are moreover bound, under pain of sin, to confess them openly. Whoever, through human respect or false shame, denies his faith, blushes at the maxims of the Gospel and the practices of Christian piety; disavows before men that which he believes in his heart; commits a grievous sin, and brings down

on himself the severest punishments of heaven. We learn this from the mouth of Jesus Christ Himself, when He says: "Whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." (Matt. x. 33.) It is, then, in every case, very sinful to deny our faith, even exteriorly or before men, either by words, signs, or actions; for our blessed Lord makes no exception, but declares unreservedly that whosoever shall deny Him "before men," He will deny him before His Father. The Church of Christ has in every age considered the external denial of faith a most grievous crime, and has condemned as heretics all those who declared it lawful in certain circumstances to deny the faith, and even inflicted the most severe penalties on those who, during the ages of persecution; denied their faith to save their lives. And justly so; for denying the faith externally is in itself a grievous lie, in a matter of the greatest importance; it is openly rejecting as a falsehood, what one believes in his heart to be the truth of God.

2. Not only is a denial of our faith by words and signs a grievous crime, but all dissimulation, by which others may think that we have denied that faith, is, too, a great sin. This was the sin of the *Libellatici*, condemned by the Roman clergy, and by St. Cyprian. To escape the tortures prepared for all professing Christians by the Roman persecutors, some weak members procured for money an attestation from the magistrates that they had complied with what the persecuting laws required from them, though in reality they had not. On account of such dissimulations, these weak Christians were looked upon by the Church as traitors to their God and to their religion, and as such they were severely punished. They were not allowed to participate of the Sacred Mysteries until, by a long and severe public penance, they had endeavoured to expiate their crime, and satisfy for the scandal they had given.

Q. Can persons who deny outwardly the true Religion or Church in which they inwardly believe, expect salvation while in that state?

A. No; "Whosoever," says Christ, "shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." (Matt. x. 33.)

3. No matter, dear children, how firmly we may be convinced in our hearts of the truth of our "religion and Church," if we deny it outwardly, by word, sign, or action, we can never "expect salvation while in that state." The holy Scriptures are clear and explicit on this point. In addition to the text quoted in the above answer, Christ says in St. Luke: "He that shall deny Me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God." (St. Luke, xii. 9.) On this authority of Christ, St. Paul declares the same truth, as a "faithful saying," and commands his disciple Timothy, and in his person all the pastors of God's Church, to preach and inculcate the same truth to their people. "A faithful saying, . . . if we deny Him, He also will deny us. . . . These things admonish and testify in the Lord." (2 Tim. ii. 12.) From these words it evidently follows, that to deny Jesus Christ, and consequently to deny His faith or His Church, is a sin of the blackest dye, and one that, on the last day, will call down on us that dreadful sentence: "I know ye not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity." (Luke, xiii. 27.)

4. It cannot be said that the foregoing passages from our Lord and St. Paul, apply only to the denying of Christ, and not to the denial of the faith and of the Church. That the denial of faith is included in these texts, and considered the same as denying Christ, is manifest from the following express declaration of Christ Himself: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me, and of *My words*, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of

Man also shall be ashamed of him, when He shall come in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels." (Mark, viii. 38.) In this text it is stated in the plainest terms, that to be ashamed, not only of Christ, but also of His words, that is, of His doctrine, of His faith, and consequently of His Church—the depository of that faith—is a mortal sin, and will entail on the soul eternal damnation. But if "to be ashamed" of Christ, and His faith will damn the soul, how much more *the denying* of Christ and His faith? Seeing, then, dear children, the great injury done to our souls, by denying our religion and Church, let nothing ever induce us to be guilty of so base a crime as the betrayal of our faith. Let us on all occasions, like good soldiers of Christ, show ourselves disposed to lay down even our lives, sooner than deny the faith in which we have been born and brought up. Never forget the warning of Christ that "whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven."

Q. When in particular are we obliged to make open profession of our faith or religion?

A. As often as God's honour, our own spiritual good, or our neighbour's edification require it. "Whoever," says Christ, "shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven." (Matt. x. 33.)

5. There are three cases, dear children, in which in particular "we are obliged to make an open profession of our faith or religion." These three cases are: "God's honour, our own spiritual good," and "our neighbour's edification." When "God's honour" requires it, we should make an open profession of "our faith or religion." If, for example, a Christian be called upon by any public authority, whether just or unjust, to give an account of his religion, he should make an open

profession of it, for to be silent then, would be to be ashamed of Christ before men, to rob Him of His honour, and to prefer the world to Him. The honour of God requires us to declare our faith openly, and not to be *ashamed of Christ nor of His words*, when we are questioned about our religion before a judge or public magistrate, though such "open profession of our faith" may cost us all we have, or even our very lives. Hence all the holy martyrs, when examined before their persecuting judges, openly confessed their faith in Christ, and rejoiced with the Apostle, to suffer for His name. They suffered death itself in the midst of the most cruel torments, rather than do the smallest thing contrary to their holy faith, or even anything that had the appearance of being contrary to faith.

6. When "our own spiritual good" requires it, we should also "make open profession of our faith or religion." And indeed, dear children, can anything required at our hands tend more to "our own spiritual good" than that of defending the cause of the great God, when we hear His divine name and truth blasphemed? For if, when we hear our father or friend spoken of in an evil way, we consider ourselves obliged to take his part, how much more should we feel ourselves obliged, when we hear the great Lord of heaven and earth blasphemed? St. Paul declares, that it is an article of divine faith, revealed by God: "This is the word of faith which we preach," that, if we confess Jesus outwardly, and believe Him in our hearts, we shall be saved; "for with the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 9.) And not without reason is it that St. Paul affirms this to be a revealed truth; for Jesus Christ Himself declares it to His holy Apostles in these words: "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven." (Matt. x. 33.) Now, by confessing Jesus Christ, is not only meant

confessing our belief of His person, but also of His faith, and consequently of His religion, in which alone His true doctrine is preserved.

7. When "our neighbour's edification" requires it, we should, too, make open profession of our faith. If, for example, another be in danger of denying his faith, unless he be publicly encouraged or instructed; or again, when we hear irreligious men railing against the Gospel, or ridiculing the sacred truths it teaches, and at the same time we have well-grounded hopes that our defending the Gospel, and what it teaches, will check the impiety and railing of these unbelievers, and prevent others who are present from being hurt by these impious attacks on religion, it becomes, then, our duty to profess openly our esteem and veneration for the Gospel and its truths, for both the *edification* of our neighbour and the honour of God call upon us to do so.

Q. Is a person in the way of salvation, who believes in the true Church, and says that in his heart he is attached to it, but through pride, human respect, or worldly motives, does not make open profession of it, or does not comply with its essential duties?

A. No; St. Paul says, "with the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 10.)

8. Though our belief "in the true Church" be most firm, and though we are fully convinced in our hearts that the Catholic Church is the only true one, yet if we "make not open profession" of this belief when we are obliged to do so, our inward belief is of little avail, and we are not "in the way of salvation." Not to "make open profession" of our faith, but to be ashamed of it, or of anything which that faith teaches—to be unwilling to maintain or defend it "through pride,

human respect, or worldly motives," that is, lest we should be contemned by others, or be laughed at by worldlings, is a great insult to Jesus Christ, a betrayal of our duty to Him; is a preferring of what men may think of us to His approval, and is to be afraid of men more than of God. "Human respect and worldly motives" can never be received by God as an excuse for not making an "open profession" of our belief when we are bound to make it; for concealing it through such unworthy motives, lest we should meet with any inconvenience, or be considered *bigoted* or *illiberal*, is a heinous sin, which God will severely punish hereafter. To be silent, when we are bound to speak out and declare our belief, is no less than to be ashamed of the faith of Christ, and of the faith of our Church, and is sacrificing our duty to God, to what others may say or think of us.

9. If we do not "comply with the essential duties" of faith—an open profession of it when necessary—but neglect all these duties, transgress the sacred laws and precepts of the Church, in order to conceal our religion, we sin grievously. And what is worse, if we join in the acts of the false religion of those with whom we may live, by assisting at their prayers, or going to their churches, we are guilty of a crime still more atrocious, because by such conduct we, in fact, make a profession of a false religion, and deny "the true Church" of Jesus Christ. By compromising our faith in any of these ways, we are out of "the way of salvation," for "with the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 10.)

Q. Is it a grievous sin to doubt concerning any article of faith?
A. It is, for doubting in matters of faith is an insult to God.

10. To doubt deliberately of any truth revealed by God and proposed by the Church, is outraging God

Himself. It is as if you should say to Him: "It is possible, O Lord, that Thou mayest be deceived, and that Thou wishest to deceive us." Judge, then, dear children, how great your sin must be, if *you doubt voluntarily* of any of the truths of faith; as, for example, of the existence of hell, of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Doubting of any of these articles, or of any other article of faith, supposes that the article we doubt of is uncertain, and, therefore, that it may be false; consequently, that God, who has revealed it, might have told a lie, or that His holy Church might have taught a falsehold, which is certainly a great injury to God's infinite veracity.

11. But if our doubts be not deliberate, and not voluntarily consented to, but wandering thoughts that present themselves to the mind, which we take no pleasure in, but rather detest and abhor, they are not sinful; and however obstinate those thoughts are, and though they continue for a considerable time to afflict us, yet while we have a horror of all false doctrine, and a love and attachment to the truth, and use all our endeavours to reject those evil suggestions, instead of being hurtful to our souls, they will be of advantage to us; for conquering again and again those temptations, will serve to confirm us more and more in our holy faith.

12. If doubts about any article of our faith be accompanied with false but apparent reasons, which make an impression on the mind, we must be very careful not to enter into any discussion of these reasons, for the great truths of faith are above all human reason. We know from the revelation of God that *they are true*, but we are too ignorant of all particulars about them, to be able to comprehend *how they are so;* and if we begin to examine them in themselves, and think to satisfy our difficulties by human reason, we shall never be able to

come to any conclusion. The infallible remedy against these suggestions, is to despise them altogether, to make an act of faith on that very article about which the doubt arises, and to beg God's assistance against them if they continue.

Q. What does St. Paul say of apostates; that is, of those *who are fallen away* from the true religion or Church?

A. That "it is impossible for them to be renewed again to penance;" that is, that their conversion is extremely difficult.

13. *Apostacy* is the forsaking of "the true religion or Church," in order to embrace idolatry, or Mahometanism, or heresy, or schism, or any other sort of religious belief; and he who is guilty of this great crime is called an "apostate." If one abandons "the true religion or Church," and passes openly into any other religion, as, for example, Protestantism, he becomes an "apostate." Atheists, Deists, Rationalists, and in general all unbelievers and infidels, who, after having professed the Catholic faith, stand out against "true religion," are, too, "apostates." Those who, after having re-entered the true religion, and renounce it a second time, are called *renegades*.

14. Of such "apostates" and *renegades*, St. Paul says, "that it is impossible for them to be renewed again to penance;" that is, it is extremely difficult for such persons to be reconciled by the sacrament of Penance; for instead of being fit subjects for reconciliation, every available means of reconciliation is become almost unavailing for men, who, in punishment of their signal ingratitude, and that repeated resistance to grace, are become castaways of heaven, like the barren and unprofitable earth, mentioned by St. Paul, "whose end is to be burnt." The word *impossible*, made use of by the

Apostle, we must take as implying no more than a thing that is very hard to be done, or that seldom happens, as when it is said by our Lord: "It is impossible that scandals should not come." (Luke, xvii. 1.) For it is certain, that is never *impossible* for the greatest sinners to repent, by the assistance which God offers them, who, too, has left all power to His ministers to forgive, in His name, the greatest sins; but "their conversion," owing to their base ingratitude, is indeed "extremely difficult."

Q. Why is the conversion of apostates so very difficult?

A. Because, by their apostacy, "they crucify again the Son of God, and make a mockery of Him." (Heb. vi. 6.)

15. The great difficulty thrown in the way of "the conversion of apostates" is, that by their heinous sin of apostacy they would concur with the Jews, who crucified Christ, again ratifying their act, and approving of the "mockery" to which the Son of God was exposed. Apostates "crucify again the Son of God," as much as lies in their power, because, by relapsing into their former crimes, they cause the name of Christ to be blasphemed among infidels, which may be considered as making "a mockery" of Christ, and in some sort crucifying Him. Apostates make "a mockery" of Christ, and expose Him to reproach and insult, because by their infamous lives Christ is mocked and upbraided, as if He were still hanging on the cross, enduring insult and ignominy.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

EPIPODIUS AND ALEXANDER MARTYRED FOR THEIR OPEN PROFESSION OF FAITH.

Epipodius and Alexander, two gentlemen of the city of Lyons, both in the flower of their age, were inseparable friends, from the time they finished their studies in the same school. One day they were summoned before the tribunal of the Roman Governor to give an account of their faith. At the very first questions, they professed themselves Christians, without disguise and without fear. Loud murmurs of the people rose on every side. The judge, in anger, exclaimed—"To what purpose have the rack and other tortures been employed, if hardened wretches still dare transgress our laws, and profess the name of Christ." Then, lest each other's presence might encourage them to resist, he ordered Alexander, the elder of the two, to be led back to prison, hoping to gain Epipodius by caresses and fair promises. He then addressed him thus: "Epipodius, it ill becomes you to be thus obstinate in throwing away your life. We adore the immortal gods, whom the emperors and all the world adore. We adore them with joy, with festivity, and public diversions. You adore a crucified Man, with whom your very homage finds not acceptance, if accompanied with sensual delights. Quit this misplaced severity for the sweet enjoyments of life, which better suit your age and rank." Epipodius replied—"The compassion you affect to show me is cruelty, in fact. It tends to destroy me for ever. I shall not suffer myself to be seduced. To you the mysteries of God are not known. You know not that Jesus Christ, whom, in contempt, you call the crucified Man, is likewise God. He is again risen from the dead, and has opened to His faithful servants the gate of heavenly bliss. This is, perhaps, a language you do not understand." The judge, being exasperated at this reply, ordered him to be struck on the mouth, then stretched upon the rack, to be torn with iron hooks, and, finally, beheaded. Two days after, he called Alexander to the bar. He began to try his constancy, by relating to him the torments that Epipodius had undergone, hoping that the dread of undergoing the like might terrify him into a compliance. The relation only served to animate the zeal of Alexander, and to quicken the desire of being soon united to his friend, by martyrdom. The judge, swelling with rage to see himself baffled, sentenced him to be first tortured, and then crucified. The tortures which the intrepid martyr underwent were so violent, that his entrails appeared through his uncovered ribs, and his bones hung as if they were all broken. or dislocated. Spent with pain, he was no sooner fastened to the cross than he gave up his soul to Christ.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE.

Julian, surnamed the Apostate, rebelled against Constantius, his cousin-german, in the spring, in 360, and by his death, in November, 361, obtained the empire. He was one of the most infamous dissemblers that ever lived; craft, levity, inconstancy, falsehood, want of judgment, and an excessive vanity, discovered themselves in all his actions, and appear in all his writings, his epistles, his satire called Misopogon, and his lives of the Cæsars. He wrote the last work to censure all the former emperors, that he might appear the only great prince. He was most foolishly superstitious, and accordingly fond of soothsayers and magicians. After the death of Constantius, he openly professed idolatry, and, by besmearing himself with the blood of impious victims, pretended to efface the character of baptism. Maximus the Magician, and others of that character, were his chief confidants. He endeavoured, by the black art, to rival the miracles of Christ, though he effected nothing. He disqualified Christians for bearing offices in the State, and commanded that they should be no longer called Christians, but Galileans. He levied heavy fines, and seized the estates of Christians, saying, in raillery, that he did it to oblige them to follow the Gospel, which recommends poverty. He often put them to death, but secretly, and alleged some reasons for doing so, that he might deprive them of the honour of martyrdom. St. Gregory of Nazianzen, when he knew him a student at Athens, in 355, foretold, from his light carriage, wandering eye, haughty look, impertinent questions, and foolish answers, what a monster the Roman Empire was fostering and breeding up. He died in the Persian war, in the year 363. He was engaged in the heat of battle, when, beholding the Persians flying before his troops, he raised his arm to cheer on his soldiers to the pursuit, when just at the moment, as Fleury relates, a Persian horseman let fly an arrow, which went through his arm, his ribs, and deep into his liver. He tried to pull it out, and even wounded his fingers in the attempt, but could not succeed, but fell over his horse. He was borne off the field, and some remedies applied, and he felt himself so much better that he called for his horse and arms again to renew the fight; but his strength failed him, and he died on the same night, the 26th of June, being only thirty-one years and six months old, and having reigned but one year and eight months after the death of Constantius. Theodoret and Sozomen relate that when he felt himself wounded he filled his hand with blood, and threw it up towards heaven, exclaiming: "O Galilean, thou hast conquered!" Theodoret likewise relates that St. Julian Saba, the Solitary, while lamenting the threats uttered by Julian against the Church, suddenly turned towards his disciples, and, with a serene and smiling

countenance, said to them: "The wild boar which wasted the vineyard of the Lord is dead!"

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Are we bound under pain of sin to profess our faith openly?
2. Are we guilty of grievous sin by dissimulation in matters of faith?
3. If we outwardly deny our religion, can we be saved?
4. Do we deny Christ when we deny our faith?
5. Are we bound to profess our faith when the honour of God requires it?
6. Are we bound to profess our faith when our neighbour's good requires it?
7. Can there be anything more obligatory than that of confessing our faith?
8. Is inward belief of any avail without an open profession of it?
9. What do you say of conforming to the practices of a false Church?
10. Is it a great sin to doubt willingly of any article of faith?
11. What do you say of involuntary doubts of faith?
12. What are the remedies against doubts about faith?
13. What do you mean by apostates?
14. What are the fatal results of apostacy?
15. Why is it so difficult for apostates to be converted?

PRACTICE.

1. Always bear in mind that you are a soldier of Christ, and never betray His interests.
2. Never so act as to make it appear that you wish to conceal your religion.
3. If ever any of the doctrines of your Church be ridiculed in your presence, immediately stand up in their defence.

PRAYER.

O God, if ever we have wavered in Thy service, or betrayed Thy name or interests, we now regret it. We are Thy soldiers, fighting in Thy service. Grant that may we ever serve Thee faithfully, and be prepared to suffer the loss of all things here below, sooner than deny a single point of our religious belief. We are named Roman Catholics, and it is our firm resolve ever to profess the faith of Rome, and live in a manner worthy of the name which we bear. Amen.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON DESPAIR, PRESUMPTION, AND THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

Q. Which are the sins against hope?
A. Despair and presumption.

1. The virtue of hope we are required by our Lord always to practise: "Always hope in your God," says the Prophet Isaias. The practice of hope is, too, a blessing, for it is written: "Happy is he who hopes in the Lord." Hope is the support and solace of the just. To sinners, also, it is a powerful means of leading them out of the wretched state to which they have been brought by sin, if they practise that virtue, in the spirit of the Gospel. But, alas! how great is the number of those who derive not the least advantage from so precious a boon! Some there are who, from their extravagant and vain expectations, abuse hope. Others there are who, from not hoping enough, renounce that virtue altogether. We sin, then, against hope in two ways—first, by excess, that is, expecting eternal happiness without fulfilling the conditions required by God to gain it; secondly, by defect, that is, not hoping as much as we should. The sin of those whose hopes are vain and extravagant is called "presumption;" the sin which those commit who hope not as much as they should, is called "despair."

Q. What is despair?
A. A diffidence in God's mercy.

2. "Despair" is a distrust of obtaining the eternal

blessings promised by God, or the helps necessary for procuring them, because we allow ourselves to be persuaded that it is impossible to obtain them. We are, then, guilty of the sin of "despair," *in despairing of obtaining pardon of our sins.* There are a great many, who, on account of the number and grievousness of their crimes, look upon themselves as of the number of the reprobate, and refuse to seek for pardon by means of the sacrament of Penance, because they think it impossible that they can be received into God's favour. This was the sin of Cain, the first murderer. Through jealousy he slew his brother; and frightful though that crime was, had he hoped in the mercy of God, and repented of his sin, he would have obtained pardon. But he would not seek for pardon, but abandoned himself to despair, and cried out: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon." (Gen. iv. 13.)

3. This was likewise the sin of Judas. This infamous traitor had betrayed his Master for gold. The crime undoubtedly was most atrocious, but not unpardonable; for his loving Master thought to touch his heart, when, in accents of kindness, He said to him: "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke, xxii. 48.) The words addressed to him made no impression on Judas. He gave himself up to wild despair, and taking up the fatal coins—the price of his Master's blood—he cast them into the temple, and then tied a rope about his neck, and died a reprobate. Nothing can be more offensive to God, and a greater insult to His goodness, than that a Christian should despair of His salvation. For has not God conferred on him many favours, and done wonderful things for him, and even laid down His own precious life to save him?

4. "Despair" is, of its own nature, a most grievous sin, because it directly attacks all the perfections of God, and the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, upon

whom our hope is founded, and because it shows that we have a poor and mean idea of the power, goodness, and fidelity of God. When the Israelites, whilst journeying through the wilderness, despaired of getting a supply of food, the anger of God was excited against them: "Therefore the Lord heard and was angry, and a fire was kindled against Jacob, and wrath came up against Israel, because they believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation . . . As yet the meat was in their mouth, and the wrath of God came upon them, and He slew the fat ones among them, and brought down the chosen men of Israel." (Ps. lxxvii. 19, 30.) Now, if such fatal consequences fell upon those who *despaired* of receiving temporal favours from God, how much more disastrous must be the evils that will befall him who despairs of his salvation! The peculiar insult offered to God by one who despairs is, that it shows that he has no sense or gratitude for past favours; and this it is with which God reproached the Israelites, when He so severely punished them in the wilderness: "They remembered not His hand in the day that He redeemed them from the hand of him that afflicted them." (Ps. lxxvii. 42.)

5. However grievous your sins be, dear children, never despair of obtaining pardon of them, for the mercy and goodness of God know no limits. "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow," says the prophet Isaias; "and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool." (Isaias, i. 18.) It is indeed true, that our Lord declares that, at the hour of their death, He shall mock at those who, during life, neglected His repeated calls and inspirations; that they shall call upon Him, but that He shall not hear them. But God, at the hour of their death, will mock only at those who will not turn to Him with sincere dispositions, and will refuse to hear only those who cry out to Him with false and deceitful hearts. Even

at the hour of death, the humble and penitent sinner will find favour with God, though his life was spent in sin and crime.

6. We are guilty of the sin of "despair," in the second place, *by distrusting the providence of God*—despairing of relief or support from God in time of sickness or adversity, and, therefore, wishing for death; having recourse to unlawful means for relief, such as charms and superstitions—losing confidence in God when in straitened circumstances, and giving ourselves up with too much anxiety to such human means as we think may conduce to relieve us. We, too, are guilty of "despair" when we think that we cannot overcome temptations, surmount our bad habits, and amend our lives, because we have often experienced our own weakness, and are sensible that our inclinations tend to evil, and therefore cease all exertion to correct our faults and subdue our passions. With the grace of God we can do everything, and God never refuses His grace to those who seek it: "Ask, and ye shall receive."

Q. What is presumption?

A. A foolish expectation of salvation, without making proper use of the necessary means to obtain it.

"Presumption" is a vain and "foolish expectation" of eternal happiness "without making proper use of the necessary means," and without performing the conditions required by God, to obtain it. Those are guilty of the sin of "presumption, in the first place, who rely too much on the goodness of God—living in their sins, in the vain hope that they will repent before they die—that there is time enough for repentance, that God is merciful and will not suffer them to be lost. We often, dear children, hear such language; but all those who think and speak in this way are guilty of presumption,

and are walking fast on the road which leads to hell. They say: "God has not created me to damn me!" But has God created you to offend Him? and in drawing you out of nothing, has He engaged to let go unpunished the outrages and insults offered to Him by those to whom He has given being and life?

8. Those sin by "presumption," in the second place, "who presume on their own strength," exposing themselves to the danger of offending God, foolishly imagining that by their own strength, endeavours, and resolutions, they can overcome temptations, and subdue their passions. This was the sin of St. Peter, when he said to Christ: "Though all men should be scandalized at Thee, I will never be scandalized." (Mat. xxvi. 33.) This presumption is very often punished by our being abandoned by God, and allowed to fall into some shameful sin, that we might be convinced of our folly, and taught our own weakness and misery; as happened to St. Peter.

9. Those are guilty of "presumption," in the third place, who, living in the dangerous occasions of sin, will not quit those occasions, vainly thinking that they are now so firmly resolved, that they will never again commit the sin to which they are exposed. This is the sin of many Christians who frequent balls and theatres, who read impious and immoral books, who listen to licentious discourses, and at the same time boldly say, "All this makes no impression on me; I know my own strength; no danger is there to me, I am certain." No danger, indeed! As if man were anything else but misery and weakness; as if it were not written: "He who loves the danger shall perish therein." (Eccl. iii. 28.) Ah! dear children, how many poor souls, relying too much on their own strength, fall every day into the most shameful crimes! Vain presumption! who can count the crimes and excesses which you bring forth every instant? If you seriously resolve to avoid sin,

to practise virtue and obtain heaven, enter on the way which leads to heaven. Watch, pray, fly from the occasions of sin, and frequent the sacraments; for these are the means which God has willed to save us.

Q. How does a person sin against the love of God?

A. By every sin, but particularly by mortal sin.

10. We sin "against the love of God" by "every sin," because in committing sin we disobey the Commandments of God, and so render ourselves displeasing to Him. If we have charity, or a true and sincere "love of God," we will have a great fear of displeasing Him. We see that children who really love their parents are exceedingly careful to avoid whatever may be displeasing to them, and are most attentive to do anything that is agreeable to their will and inclination. In like manner, if we have a real and sincere "love of God," we shall feel it a duty and pleasure to do everything pleasing to Him, and we shall be most careful to avoid "every sin," even the most venial; for the lightest sin is a disobedience of God's commands, and consequently displeasing in His eyes.

11. But it is "particularly by mortal sin" that we sin "against the love of God," for "mortal sin" not only lessens our love for God, but it destroys altogether that love, causes a total separation between ourselves and God. When we commit a "mortal sin," we prefer our own pleasures, and the gratification of our passions, to God. In committing "mortal sin," we virtually tell God that we have no respect for His commands—that we care very little about His admonitions—that we make no account of His promises—that we are indifferent to His rewards or punishments, and that what our inclinations suggest we will do, no matter how displeasing or offensive it may be to Him. Ah, dear children, can there be any insult equal to that offered to God

by "mortal sin"? Let us then carefully guard against so crying an evil; let us be ever watchful against the approaches of a monster so frightful, and always pray that we may never be so wicked as to "sin against the love of God" by "mortal sin."

Q. How does a person sin against the love of his neighbour?

A. By injuring him in any respect, and by not assisting him, when able, in his spiritual or corporal necessities.

12. A person sins "against the love of his neighbour," dear children, by saying or doing anything that may be injurious to him. We should *love our neighbour as ourselves*, and so, we should wish him well, and endeavour to ward off every evil from him. But to injure our neighbour is not only not to love him, but it is to hate him; and St. John says, that "he who says he loves God and hates his brother is a liar, and the truth is not in him." If we wish not to sin "against the love of our neighbour," we must wish him every good thing, desire his welfare here, and his eternal happiness hereafter. We must not only refrain from wishing evil, but we must do him a kindness when his circumstances require it, and ours will allow it. It is not enough not to injure or insult him, but we must edify him, both by word and example. It is not enough not to destroy his property or malign his character, but we must warn him when any danger threatens him, and stand up in defence of his good name, when it is unjustly assailed.

13. We also sin against the love of our neighbour "by not assisting him, when able, in his spiritual and corporal necessities." As we are obliged to love our neighbour as ourselves, we certainly should procure him all the good we can, and prevent whatever evils are likely to fall upon him. Now the greatest good that

we can do for our neighbour is to relieve him "in his spiritual and corporal necessities." And if *we are able* to do so, and neglect doing it, we sin against the love we owe him. You know, dear children, that persons will be condemned at the last judgment to everlasting flames, as our Saviour tells us, because they have not assisted their neighbours in their corporal necessities: "I was hungry," says Christ, "and you gave Me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink; I was naked, and you clothed Me not;" therefore, says He, "go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." When our neighbour is in want we should assist him—when in distress we should succour him—when naked we should clothe him—when hungry we should feed him—and when in sorrow and affliction, we should comfort and encourage him. And if we are *not able* to clothe or feed him, let us, at least, sympathize with him, and speak to him in kind and consoling language. If, instead of acting thus towards him, we speak harshly to him, treat him with severity and bitterness, we are guilty of *sinning against the love of our neighbour.*

14. "In his spiritual necessities" we should also assist our neighbour. For, if not relieving him in his corporal necessities be so severely punished, what must those expect who have been wanting in relieving him "in his spiritual necessities"? As far as the soul is more valuable than the body, so much greater is our obligation to assist our neighbour "in his spiritual" than "in his corporal necessities." Our Lord came not into the world to relieve our corporal, but our spiritual wants; He spent not His labour and His toil in preaching, teaching, and instructing, to heal the diseases of our bodies, but those of our souls. He died on the cross not to redeem us from temporal afflictions, but from sin and damnation. From the example of Jesus, we should learn the obligation under which we lie of promoting the spiritual good of our neighbour, either by ourselves

or others, and of preventing his falling into sin when we see him in danger of it.

15. A person, then, "sins against the love of his neighbour," who is witness of his neighbour's crimes, and evil doings and sayings, and remains unconcerned at them. He may say to himself: "What is it to me? It is their own affair, and not mine. I have enough to do to attend to my own affairs, without taking on myself the charge of others." What is it to me, say you? This was the answer which the Scribes and Pharisees gave, when Judas flung back the money he had received, saying: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." (Matt. xxvii. 4.) What is that to us? they say, look thou to it. What is it to me? say you, when you see your neighbour in danger of destroying his soul! Why, are you not obliged to love your neighbour as yourself? Why, can you really love your neighbour, and stand by unconcerned, and see him ruined when you might hinder it? Should you see a person in danger of being drowned, and could save him, would you not consider yourself as guilty of his death if he perished, because you did not give him a helping hand?

16. But when you see him in danger of being ruined for eternity by sin—when you see him exposed to sure destruction by his companionship with debauched and wicked persons, and take no care to remove him from sin and danger, do you think that you will be excused in the sight of God? Has that soul for whom Christ died no concern for you? Is that soul purchased by His blood of no concern to you? Ah! dear children, those who now neglect assisting their neighbour "in his spiritual necessities," will find, in the day of judgment, that their neighbour's spiritual good should be their concern, and that they will not be held guiltless for neglecting to correct and admonish their neighbour, and for not preventing his sin when they were able to do so. The ruin of those that perish by our silence

or want of exertion, will be charged on us another day, and, according to the Prophet Ezechiel, *their blood will be required at our hands.*

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

DESPAIR OF JUDAS.

After having betrayed his Divine Master for thirty pieces of silver, remorse seized on the heart of Judas. The price of his Saviour's blood he would not keep, so he went to the chief priests, and presented them with the money, but they would not have it. What is it to us, said they to him, that you have sold your Master? Judas then cast the thirty pieces of silver into the temple, and acknowledging his crime, said: *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.* The devil was by, and hearing the words, feared that his victim would truly repent of his crime, and so escape his hands. What, then, has he recourse to? He alarms Judas, he fills his soul with darkness, he loads his heart with affliction and sadness. Judas abandons himself to despair, and by a fresh crime, puts an end to his miserable life. He took a rope, walked out, placed the rope about his neck, tied the other end to a tree, and, suspending himself, put a period to his existence. Though the betrayal of his Master was a great crime, yet it was not an unpardonable one, and had Judas implored forgiveness, by having recourse to the mercy of God, he would have obtained it.

THE DESPAIRING SINNER.

An old sinner, who had spent all his life in the commission of the greatest crimes, having fallen dangerously ill, a holy priest, who had taken an interest in him, paid him a visit for the purpose of inducing him to think, even at the last hour, on the state of his poor soul. When the priest addressed him on the subject, the sick man made no answer. The priest represented to him the danger to which he was exposed, and exhorted him to make a confession. "Yes, yes, I will confess," said he, but still he deferred it. The priest, fired with holy zeal, still more earnestly exhorted him. "Very well, then," said the sick man, "come to-morrow, and I will make my confession." On the morrow, the priest came; and, being alone with the sick man, he made the sign of the cross, and commenced hearing the confession.

The sick man was for some time silent, and then, in frightful tones, he repeated these terrific words of Scripture: "*Peccator videbit et irascetur*"—"the sinner will open his eyes and be filled with rage." And then, in a moment, he hid his face in the bed-clothes. The confessor uncovered his head, and told him there was no time to be lost, and that it was necessary that he should confess immediately. "Yes, father, I will confess," the sick man replied; and then he repeated the second part of the text: "*Dentibus suis fremet et tabescet*"—"the sinner shall gnash his teeth and foam with rage;" and again he hid his face in the clothes. The confessor, a second time, uncovered his head, and entreated him, with tears, to think of God, and to make his confession. "Yes, yes, father, I shall confess, I shall confess," said he again, and, for the third time, he hid his face in the bed covering, and repeated, at the same time, "*Desiderium peccatorum peribit*"—"the desire of the sinner shall perish with him." The confessor, alarmed, again removed the covering from the head but, alas! the old sinner was dead!

PRESUMPTION OF ST. PETER.

When Judas led the Jews to apprehend Christ, St. Peter's zeal for his Master made him draw his sword against his unjust persecutors, and smite Malchus, one of the busiest among them. But Christ taught him that the arms of His disciples were patience and humility. St. Peter, by his presumption, and by having neglected to watch and pray, deserved to fall from his fervour into a state of lukewarmness. He followed Jesus still when He was in the hands of His enemies, but at a distance, as St. Luke takes notice. He who before thought of dying for his Master, and drew his sword to defend Him, was become afraid of sharing in His disgrace. Nor did he stop here; thinking himself secure against the contagion of evil example, he mingled with the servants of the high priest, and other enemies of Christ, in the lower hall of Caiphas' house, desirous of seeing how matters would end. As he was standing amongst the servants, warming himself at the fire, a servant maid came up and asked if he did not belong to Jesus of Nazareth. Peter no longer felt the courage or the zeal he had shown to defend his Master in the garden; he trembled at the woman's voice, and denied Him: and immediately the cock crowed. He was again asked the same question, and again he not only denied his Master, but he moreover added, that he did not even know any such man. About an hour after, a servant of the high priest declared that he had seen him with Jesus in the garden, and others said that his very language betrayed him, and proved him to be a Galilean. Peter then began to swear, and most solemnly protest that he did not so much as know the man they

spoke of! The cock crowed at that moment. The terrible consequences of presumption! An Apostle, the Prince of the Apostles, for having too much reliance on himself, falls so shamefully!

ST. JOHN, THE ALMONER.

St. John received his surname from his profuse alms-deeds. He was nobly descended, very rich, and a widower, at Amathus, in Cyprus, where, having buried all his children, he employed the whole income of his estate in the relief of the poor, and was no less remarkable for his great piety. The reputation of his great sanctity raised him to the patriarchal chair of Alexandria, about the year 608, at which time he was upwards of fifty years of age. On his arrival at that city, he ordered an exact list to be taken of his *masters*. Being asked who they were, he answered "The poor," namely, on account of their great interest in the court of heaven in behalf of their benefactors. Their number amounted to seven thousand five hundred, whom he took under his special protection, and furnished with all necessaries. He consecrated to the service of the poor the great revenues of his see, then the first in all the East, both in riches and rank. When his stewards complained that he impoverished his church, his answer was that God would provide for them. To vindicate his conduct and silence their complaints, he recounted to them a vision he had in his youth, of a beautiful woman, brighter than the sun, with an olive garland on her head, whom he understood to be charity or compassion for the miserable; who said to him: "I am the eldest daughter of the great King; if you enjoy my favour, I will introduce you to the great Monarch of the universe. No one has so great an interest with Him as myself, who was the occasion of His coming down from heaven to become man for the redemption of mankind." When a certain person whom he had privately relieved with a most bountiful alms, expressed his gratitude in the strongest terms, St. John cut him short, saying: "Brother, I have not yet spilt my blood for you, as Jesus Christ, my Master and my God, commands me." One day, having in vain exhorted a certain nobleman to forgive one with whom he was at variance, he soon after invited him to his private chapel, to assist at his Mass, and there desired to recite with him the Lord's Prayer. The saint stopped at that petition: *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us.* The other, feeling himself struck to the heart, fell at his feet, and was from that moment sincerely reconciled to his adversary.—*Alban Butler.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. In how many ways do we sin against hope?
2. In the first place, how are we guilty of despair?
3. What effects proceeded from the despair of Judas?
4. Can you show from Scripture that distrust in God is very hateful to Him?
5. Should we ever despair of obtaining pardon of our sins?
6. How are we guilty of despair in the second place?
7. Who are those who, in the first place, are guilty of presumption?
8. Who are guilty of presumption in the second place?
9. Mention those who, in the third place, are guilty of presumption?
10. Do we sin against charity by doing anything displeasing to God?
11. Why, in particular, is mortal sin a violation of charity?
12. What are we to do that we may not sin against our neighbour?
13. Does the love of our neighbour require that we should assist him in his corporal necessities?
14. Should we assist our neighbour in his spiritual necessities?
15. Who are those who assist not their neighbour in his spiritual necessities?
16. Will the excuses generally made for not assisting our neighbour in his spiritual necessities, be received by God?

PRACTICE.

1. Whenever you are tempted to despair, make acts of hope, calling to mind the goodness and mercy of your Redeemer.
2. When you are tempted to presume too much on the goodness of God, humble yourself before the Lord, and say with the penitent David: "Pierce my flesh with Thy fear, O Lord, for I am afraid of Thy judgments."
3. Always recollect that loving God and your neighbour is the fulfilment of the whole law.

PRAYER.

O dear Lord! we give Thee thanks for the instruction which has been just imparted to us. If, at any time, we have been guilty of transgressing against the virtue of hope, we this day ask pardon of our sins. Pardon us, Lord, for having distrusted Thy infinite goodness, and for having forgotten Thy merciful promises. And if ever

we have sinned against Thy law, thinking ourselves secure because Thou art so good, we now regret our presumption, and promise Thee that for the time to come we shall so walk in the way of Thy commandments, that we may never despair in Thy goodness, nor presume on Thy great mercy and love. Amen.

CHAPTER XX.

ON THE HONOUR PAID THE SAINTS.

Q. What else is forbidden by the first Commandment?

A. To give to any creature the honour due to God alone.

1. "By the first Commandment" we are, dear children, strictly prohibited from giving to anything created, whether that thing created be living or dead, that supreme worship and honour which belongs "to God alone." The honour and worship "due to God alone," if paid to any person or thing but God, is called *idolatry*.

2. The term idolatry is derived from two Greek words, *εἴδολον*, a figure or statue, and *λατρεία*, worship or adoration, and signifies the worship of idols. An idol —*εἴδολον*—is an image or statue representing some false god or goddess. Idolatry is the adoration paid to such a statue or image, as, for example, to the statue of Jupiter, or to the statue of Juno. Those who pay this false adoration or worship, are called idolaters. All those, too, who pay to anything created that divine worship due to God alone, are called idolaters. Those who lived before the invention of sculpture and painting, and adored the sun, moon, and stars, were idolaters. The Ghebers, or fire-worshippers, were

idolaters. All who should pay the Blessed Virgin or the saints that divine honour due to God alone, would, too, be called idolaters.

3. It was after the deluge that idolatry commenced. The descendants of Noah lost sight of the one true God, and began to adore false gods. They went so far, as we have already related in a previous chapter, as to pay divine worship to the most contemptible beings—to men whose crimes were their only merit; to figures of stone or wood, and even to the roots growing in their gardens. This astounding blindness and corruption prevail even in our own times; for, even at this day, idolaters are to be found in great numbers in Asia, Africa, and America.

4. The crime of idolatry, or of *giving* "to any creature the honour due to God alone," may be divided into *external* and *internal* idolatry. *External* idolatry is that of the heathens, who believed in their hearts various creatures to be gods, trusted in them, and prayed to them as gods, and even offered sacrifice to them. Thus, the children of Israel, who, from their long stay among the idolatrous Egyptians, and from the wicked example set them by the neighbouring nations, were most prone to fall into this crime, made a golden calf, and they said: "These are thy gods, O Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt. . . . . And, rising in the morning, they offered holocausts and peace-victims." (Exodus, xxxii. 4.)

5. Besides *external* idolatry, there is another sort of idolatry, called *internal*, which consists in preferring our passions and pleasures to God—in fixing our hearts upon the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world more than upon God—in placing our trust in them, and seeking our chief happiness from their enjoyment. The miser, for example, makes a god of his riches; the sensual man makes a god of his stomach; the impure man makes a god of his unlawful pleasures. Now, though

this be not a formal worship of idols like *external* idolatry, of which we have before spoken, yet it is a species of idolatry, because it is *adoring* and loving the creature more than the Creator, and because it is refusing to pay God the homage due to Him; and, therefore, the Scripture declares this to be idolatry, and an idolatry which for ever excludes from the kingdom of heaven: "Know ye this," says St. Paul, "and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean, or covetous person (which is a serving of idols), hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (Eph. v. 5.)

Q. Is a person guilty of real idolatry who pays an external act of worship towards any creature, although he believes that creature to have no divine power?

A. Yes; if that external act of adoration be paid to a creature as if it were God, and with a view of inducing those present to think that it is done as an acknowledgment of its being God.

6. Though a person firmly believes in his heart that the idol is nothing more than a mere block of stone or wood, yet, if he pays it an external act of worship, he is guilty of real idolatry. This was the idolatry of those weak and miserable Christians, who, during the ages of persecution, fell prostrate before the heathen idols, burned incense to them, or performed some other act of worship, in order to escape the torments with which they were threatened by their savage tyrants. The holy martyrs considered those acts of worship as a most detestable idolatry; and sooner than be guilty of such impious acts, endured tortures as excruciating as the malice of their persecutors could invent.

7. There is no crime, dear children, more abominable in the sight of God than idolatry; for we find in the Old Testament, that He let fall on those who were guilty of that crying sin His severest judgments. In the book of Deuteronomy we find that a curse and confusion are the portion of idolaters: "Cursed be the man that

maketh a graven or molten thing, the abomination of the Lord, the work of the hands of artificers, and shall put it into a secret place." (Deut. xxvii. 15.) "Let them all be confounded that adore graven things, and that glory in their idols," says the Prophet David, in his ninety-sixth Psalm.

Q. Are we forbidden to honour the saints?

A. No; if we only honour them as God's special friends and faithful servants, and if we do not give them supreme and divine honour, which belongs to God alone.

8. The word "saint"—in Latin *sanctus*—is derived, according to some writers, from the words *sanguine unctus*, that is, purified by blood. "Saints" is the name given to the blessed who reign in heaven with God; because they have been purified from all their sins in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood." We are forbidden to *adore* the saints, for *adoration*, properly so called, as we have already said, is due to God alone, and cannot be given to angels or saints, or to any creature. To adore the saints would be acknowledging that they possess what only belongs to God; it would be paying them *supreme* worship, called in Latin *latria*. And giving them "that supreme or divine worship which belongs to God alone," would be no less than idolatry. The saints and angels, and even the blessed Virgin Mary, the queen of saints, are only creatures; and to give supreme worship to any creature would be, we repeat, idolatry.

9. But we are not "forbidden to honour the saints;" for, if the Church triumphant in heaven, and the Church militant on earth, be not two different Churches, but form one and the same Church—one and the same society—is it not right and becoming to pay particular honour to those who are the principal ornaments of that

Church? In every community, are not those particularly *honoured* who are distinguished for their virtues and dignities? The very impulse of our nature, the feelings of the human heart demand of us, that whenever we perceive any virtuous excellency in another, we should honour and respect him, and testify the same outwardly by our words and actions, when an occasion of doing so occurs. To honour one who is distinguished for rank and title, and possessed of a dignity above others, is only what is due to him, and what he deems himself entitled to. Thus parents expect this from their children, masters from their servants, magistrates from their people, and kings from their subjects. But the saints of God enjoy rank and station far above us, and are possessed of many great qualities and distinctions that we have not; and on that account are entitled to every honour and respect that we can give them; and to refuse them that honour and veneration would be highly criminal.

10. "As God's special friends and faithful servants," we should honour the saints. The saints are closely connected with God. For their fidelity to His command while they were here on earth, they are now rewarded in heaven with eternal joy, and are made to sit on thrones resplendent with glory and brightness; and thus beloved and honoured by Him, "as His special friends and faithful servants," should we not honour and respect them? How can we be said to have a sincere love and respect for God, if we have not a love and respect for the "special friends and faithful servants" of God? Thus the Church, which is the "pillar and ground of truth," has ever paid honour and veneration to the saints, and has taught her children to pay the same. She has instituted feasts in their honour—she has celebrated their virtues in her hymns and canticles—she has raised temples and consecrated altars under their invocation. And would it not be an

act of impiety to dare stand up in opposition to the teaching and example of the Spouse of Jesus Christ?

11. To honour the saints "as God's special friends and faithful servants," we are not forbidden by the first Commandment; but we are forbidden to "give them supreme or divine honour," for that "belongs to God alone." "Supreme or divine honour" cannot be paid to any creature, for God alone is entitled to it, as we have said above, and it would be idolatry to give it to any one but to Him. But the respect and veneration which we pay the saints, and which in Latin is called *dulia*, so far from being an injury to God, is an honour due to Him, because it is only for *His* sake that it is given them. Yes, it is God Himself that we honour in the saints; for we acknowledge that it is God who has made them saints; that their sanctity has flowed from the sanctity of God; that the virtues which they have practised have been His work, and that in crowning their merits He has crowned His own gifts.

Q. How do Catholics distinguish between the honour they give to God and the honour they give to the saints, when they pray to God and the saints?

A. Of God alone they beg grace and mercy; and of the saints they only ask the assistance of their prayers. (Tobias, xii. 12.)

12. "Catholics" draw a very broad distinction between the manner in which they pray to God and the manner in which they pray to the saints. When they pray to God, they ask Him to have *mercy* on them, to deliver them, to save them, to grant them grace: *O Lord, deliver us! O Lord, have mercy on us!* thus acknowledging God to be the very source of grace, mercy, and life. But when Catholics pray to the saints, they do not ask them *to have mercy* on them, or to *deliver* them;

they only ask them to intercede with God for them—"they only ask the assistance of their prayers." We address our prayers to God as the very *Author* of grace, as when we say, *grant us grace, O Lord;* but when praying "to the saints" we address them as the glorious and happy friends of God, and entreat of them that they would use their interest with God, and obtain for us that which He alone can grant. We ask them to unite their prayers with ours, that God may accede to our request. We beg of them, as the friends and favourites of the Most High, who has appointed them, as so many channels, through which His graces flow to us, not to forget, but use their powerful intercession for us.

13. From "the saints" immediately we do not expect graces and favours, but from God, through the mediation of the saints. It is not through the merits of the saints that we hope to gain what we ask, but through the merits of Jesus Christ, who has redeemed, sanctified, and raised them to that great degree of glory which they now enjoy. We honour God when we demand from Him "grace and mercy," because He is the very source of "grace and mercy;" we *honour* the saints when we beg of them to pray to God for us. And, dear children, do you not see that the honour paid to God by "begging grace and mercy," is very different, and quite distinct from the honour paid the saints, when we "only ask the assistance of their prayers"?

Q. Is it lawful to recommend ourselves to the saints, and to ask their prayers?

A. Yes; as it is a lawful and very pious practice to ask the prayers of our fellow-creatures upon earth, and to pray for them. (1 Thes. v. 25; James, v. 16.)

14. It is, indeed, dear children, "a lawful and very

pious practice" to pray to the saints, and to have recourse to them, that, by their intercession, they may obtain for us, of God, the graces necessary for us. The Council of Trent enjoins on all Bishops, and others who sustain the office and charge of teaching, that they especially instruct the faithful diligently concerning the intercession and invocation of saints; "teaching them, that the saints who reign together with Christ offer up their own prayers to God for men; that it is good and useful suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, aid, (and) help for obtaining benefits from God, through his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our alone Redeemer and Saviour." (Sess. xxv.) It is, then, "lawful" and laudable to ask the prayers of the saints, to have recourse to their aid, in order to obtain favours of God; for it can never be unlawful for us to ask them to do what they actually do, and it certainly must be profitable to us to desire them to do for us in particular what they are constantly employed doing for all in general. Praising and adoring God, and praying for the salvation of men, is the great employment of the saints in heaven; it must then be, not only "lawful," but praiseworthy, to desire them to do that at which they are continually employed.

15. That the saints and angels may be asked to pray for us, we have the express authority of Scripture. In the Apocalypse, St. John the Apostle makes this prayer for the seven Churches which are in Asia: "Grace be unto you, and peace from Him that is . . . . and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne." (Apoc. i. 4.) Here, with the same breath, the Apostle prays for grace and peace from God, and from the seven Spirits that assist before His throne; but surely there cannot be a more express and positive authority than this, for desiring the prayers of the saints and angels in heaven. In the Book of Job we read: "Call now if there be any that will answer thee, and turn to some

of the saints." (Job, v. 1.) Surely this shows that it was an ordinary thing with Job to invoke the aid of the saints.

16. That it was always the practice of the Church, from the earliest ages, to invoke the aid of the saints, we have the testimony of the greatest lights of the Church. In the third century, we find Origen offering up the following prayer: "I will cast myself on my knees," he says, "and not daring, on account of my crimes, to offer my prayer to God, I will call all the saints to my aid. O saints of heaven, I beseech you, to fall down at the feet of the God of mercies for me, a sinful wretch." (In Lament.) St. Augustin says: "We do not pray for the holy martyrs, but we recommend ourselves to their prayers." (Tract 84, in Joan.) We must then conclude, that asking the saints to pray for us "is a lawful and very pious practice," as all those who have been eminent for holiness and learning have taught and practised it.

17. "It is a lawful and very pious practice to ask the prayers of our fellow-creatures on earth, and to pray for them;" and our prayers for one another are so agreeable to God Almighty, that sometimes, when He refuses to hear sinners who pray for themselves, because they are unworthy of being heard, He grants what they require to the prayers of His servants for them. Thus God said to Job's friends: "Go to My servant Job . . . . and My servant Job shall pray for you, his face will I accept, that your folly be not imputed to you;" and they did so: "and the Lord accepted the face of Job." (Job, xlii. 8, 9.) St. Paul frequently desired the prayers of his people; and when he was in great affliction, he said to the Philippians: "I know that this shall fall out to me unto salvation, through your prayers." (Philip. i. 19.) Now "as it is lawful and a very pious practice to ask the prayers of our fellow-creatures here upon earth," how much more must

it be to ask their prayers, now that they are in glory with God. Is not their charity more ardent now than when they were on earth? Is not their desire of our salvation more pure? Is not their interest with God now more powerful than when they were on earth? Are they not more willing now to hear us than they were then? It is even a part of their employment to pray for us, and as it is so, the aid of their prayers must be so much the more profitable to us.

Q. Is it not injurious to the mediation of Christ, and consequently displeasing to God, to ask the saints to pray for us?

A. No; it is not injurious to the mediation of Christ, nor is it displeasing to God to ask the prayers of the saints.

18. As it was not injurious to the mediation of Christ, when St. John prayed for grace and peace from "the seven Spirits" that stand before the throne of God; neither is it injurious "to the mediation of Christ," when we ask the prayers of the saints. We certainly have but one *Mediator of redemption*, Jesus Christ, as St. Paul tell us; but we can have *many mediators* of prayer or intercession. There is only one, Jesus Christ, who can have *immediate access* to God for us; for Jesus Christ, through His infinite merits, has a *just right* to ask and obtain from His Father anything He pleases for us. He has redeemed us by His blood, He has appeased the wrath of heaven, and therefore, He is our *Mediator of redemption*. He can ask a favour in *His own right*, as a thing which He Himself is entitled to; but neither the saints in heaven, nor we upon earth, have any *right or title of ourselves* to obtain anything of God; and when the saints in heaven pray for us, their only claim to be heard is founded upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and when their prayers are heard they are heard only *as a favour* granted to them, and not as a *just right*. Now, it is evident, that the more there are who join together in asking any favour

of God through Christ and for His sake, the more He is honoured by it; so that our asking the saints to pray for us, instead of being "injurious to the meditation" of Christ, is in reality honouring His "mediation," because, by so doing, we profess our belief, that He alone can render efficacious and meritorious the prayers and the intercession of the saints. Besides, there is nothing more pleasing to God than humility; but when we "ask the prayers of the saints," we practise that virtue, for we acknowledge our own unworthiness; and that on account of our misery and sin, we deserve not to be heard by God.

19. And if we ask grace and peace, and the like, from the saints, and if we use expressions as if we expected more from them than barely to pray for us, our meaning is, that we desire those things from them, in the way in which alone we know they can give them, that is, by their asking them of God for us, through the merits of Christ. When we say, for example, St. Joseph grant me patience, our meaning is, that he would be pleased to grant it to us by obtaining it from God. And, surely, there is no insult or injury offered to Jesus Christ in thus praying to the saints. We are not supposed to offer an insult to a prince or ruler of this world, if, when we wish to obtain a favour from him, and which favour he alone can give, we employ the agency of some influential person about his court, and ask him to intercede with the prince to grant us our request.

Q. Do the angels and saints know what passeth on earth, and can they hear our prayers?

A. They certainly do, for they see all things in God.

20. The prophets, who were men, knew by a special grace what passed at a great distance: Eliseus knew what passed at an immense distance in the King of Syria's chamber. (4 Kings, vi.) He also knew what

passed in his absence between Naaman and Giezi (4 Kings, v.) St. Peter knew the sacrilegious lie of Ananias and Saphira. But as the prophets could foresee future events, and see things done at a distance by the mere *light of grace*, so the saints in heaven may do the same by the *light of glory*.

21. Origen expressly says, that *all the angels and blessed souls befriend those that serve God, and that they know who are in His favour*. (L. 8, contra Celsum.) And St. Gregory, in the fourth book of his Dialogues, is of the same opinion, as he writes thus: "Because all the saints see God, what is it they do not know then, when they know Him who knows all things?" This was also the opinion of St. Augustin, when he made this apostrophe to St. Paul: "You reign with Christ, together with him whom you stoned (St. Stephen); you both now see us, you both hear this my discourse. I desire you both to pray for us." (Sermon 316.) And St. Asterius, Bishop of *Amasea*, in the fourth age, prayed thus to the martyrs: "You yourselves have formerly prayed to the martyrs before you were martyrs. They heard you when you entreated them. Now that you can hear us, grant us our request." (Sermon 10.) We see, then, that these holy fathers believed that as the prophets could foresee future events, so the saints can know what passes on this earth, for God can communicate to His saints the knowledge of our petitions, either through Himself or through the ministry of our guardian angels.

22. St. Luke declares, that "there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance." (Luke, xv. 10.) The angels must, then, see *even* the penitent heart, otherwise they could not rejoice; and as penitence is an internal affection of the mind—if they can see this, they can surely hear our prayers. But why should the *saints* be kept in ignorance of what passes in the world, any more than the

angels, for "the saints are as the angels in heaven"? (Matt. xxii. 31.)

Q. Can you prove from Scripture that the angels and saints actually pray for us?

A. Yes; Scripture is very clear on the subject.

23. In the book of Zacharias we read, that an angel of the Lord thus prayed for Jerusalem: "The angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, with which Thou hast been angry these threescore and ten years? And the Lord answered the angel that spoke in me, with good words and comfortable words." (Zach. i. 12, 13.) From this passage it follows, that an angel takes an *interest* in Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and that he *knows* that God is angry with them, and even *how long* God was so; and that he prays for them, and that his payer is attended to. That the "saints do pray for us," we have the authority of St. John, for in his Apocalypse he tells us, that "the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints." (Apoc. v. 8.) But as the saints neither pray for themselves, nor for those around them in heaven—for those who surround the throne of God require no prayers—the prayers of the saints must, therefore, be offered up for those who stand in need of them, and they are only those who are still wayfarers in this world.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE INDIAN IDOL, JUGGERNAUT.

This idol is a carved block of wood, with a hideous face painted black, and a distended blood-red mouth. It is magnificently dressed, and the appellation of Juggernaut is one of the names of Vishnu,

the preserver of the world. On festival days, the throne of the image is placed on a tower sixty feet high, moving on wheels, accompanied with two other idols—his white brother Balaram, and his yellow sister Shubudra—who likewise sit upon their separate thrones. Six long ropes are attached to the tower, by which the people draw it along. The priests and their attendance stand round the throne on the tower, and occasionally turn to the worshippers with indecent songs and gestures. The walls of the temple and the sides of the car, are also covered with obscene images, in large durable sculpture. While the tower moves along, numbers of the devout worshippers throw themselves on the ground in order to be crushed by the wheels, and the multitude shout in approbation of the act, as a pleasing sacrifice to the idol. In the temple a number of females are kept for the pilgrims who come there every year; particularly at two great festivals, in March and July, the pilgrims flock in crowds to the temple. It is calculated that there are 1,200,000 of them annually, of whom it is said nine out of ten die on the road, of famine, hardship, and sickness: at any rate, it is a well-known fact, that the country for miles round the sacred place is covered with human bones. Many old persons undertake the pilgrimage that they may die on the holy ground.

THE SACRIFICES OF THE DRUIDS.

The Druids commonly resided in thick groves, chiefly of oak, whence Pliny derives their name. The names of their two chief divinities were Teutates and Hesus, to whom they offered human victims. It was an article of their creed, that nothing but the life of man could atone for the life of man. On solemn occasions they reared huge images, whose limbs, formed of osiers, they filled with living men, and as Strabo says, with other animals; then setting fire to the images, they thus sacrificed human victims as an offering to their cruel divinities. Thieves and robbers, and other malefactors, were preferred for this purpose; but if those were wanting, innocent persons were taken. Diodorus says, that condemned criminals used to be reserved for five years, and on a certain day burned together.

THE VISION OF JUDAS MACHABEUS.

Judas Machabeus, fearing that he should be overpowered by his enemies and brought into slavery, had recourse to prayer. He fervently entreated the Almighty to send His holy angels to his defence, as he had formerly sent them against Sennacherib, and in one night had slain one hundred and eighty thousand of the Assyrian army. Almighty God heard his prayer, and comforted him with an appari-

tion of the holy priest Onias, holding up his hands, and praying for all the people of the Jews. And there appeared also another man, admirable for age and glory, and environed with great beauty and majesty, of whom Onias said: "This is a lover of his brethren and of the people of Israel. This is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city, Jeremias, the prophet of God. And then Jeremias stretched forth his hand, and gave Judas a sword of gold, saying: Take this holy sword, a gift from God, with which thou shalt overthrow the adversaries of My people." Judas related this vision which he had to his soldiers, who, very much encouraged by the recital of it, marched full of confidence to battle, and gained a complete victory, five and thirty thousand of the Assyrians having fallen. (2 Mach. xv.)

ST. ASTERIUS ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

St. Asterius, in his sermon on the holy martyrs, thus speaks of the invocation of the saints, and their great influence with God: "We keep, through every age, their bodies decently enshrined, as most precious pledges—vessels of benediction, the organs of their blessed souls, the tabernacles of their holy minds. We put ourselves under their protection. The martyrs defend the Church, as soldiers guard a citadel. The people flock in crowds from all quarters, and keep great festivals to honour their tombs. All who labour under the heavy load of affliction fly to them for refuge. We employ them as intercessors in our prayers and suffrages. In this refuge, the hardships of poverty are eased, diseases cured, the threats of princes appeased. A parent taking a sick child in his arms, unmindful of physicians, runs to some one of the martyrs, offering by him his prayers to the Lord, and addressing him whom he employs as his mediator in such words as these: You, who have suffered for Christ, intercede for one who suffers by sickness. By that great power and confidence you have, offer a prayer in behalf of fellow-servants. Though you are now removed from us, you know what men on earth feel, in their sufferings and diseases. You formerly prayed to martyrs, before you were yourself a martyr. You then obtained your request by asking; now as you are possessed of what you asked, in your turn assist me. By your crown, ask what may be our advancement. If another is going to be married, he begins his undertaking by soliciting the prayers of the martyrs. Who putting to sea, weighs anchor before he has invoked the Lord of the sea, "by the martyrs"? And again, he describes the magnificence with which their festivals were celebrated over the world. "We lay the bodies in rich shrines and sepulchres," he says, "and erect stately tabernacles

for their repose, that we may be stirred up to an emulation of their honours. Nor is our devotion to them without its recompense, for we enjoy their patronage with God."

ST. JEROME AND PAULA.

When St. Jerome, one of the greatest lights of the Church, had lost by death his pious pupil Paula, he addressed to her this prayer, convinced that she was already in the possession of the glory of the saints: "O holy Paula! my faithful pupil, assist by your prayers your old preceptor. Your faith and your piety have already united you to your celestial spouse Jesus. And because you are now so near Him, you can easily obtain what you ask for me."

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is the honour due to God, if paid to any creature, called?
2. What do you mean by idolatry and idolaters?
3. Who were the first idolaters?
4. What do you mean by external idolatry?
5. What do you understand by internal idolatry?
6. Is external worship paid to an idol idolatry, though you believe the idol to be only mere wood and stone?
7. Can you prove from Scripture that God detests idolatry?
8. Would it be idolatry to pay supreme worship to the saints?
9. Why should we honour and venerate the saints?
10. As God's special friends, are they entitled to our honour and respect?
11. In showing honour to the saints, do we pay honour to God?
12. In what way do our prayers to God and our prayers to the saints differ?
13. Is it through the merits of the saints that we expect what we pray for?
14. Is it a laudable and pious practice to pray to the saints?
15. Can you prove from Scripture that it is lawful to pray to the saints?
16. What has been the doctrine of the early ages of the Church as to prayers to the saints?
17. Have we Scripture authority for the practice of praying for each other?

18. Can you explain how praying to the saints is not injurious to the mediation of Christ.

19. When we ask anything from the saints, in what way is our prayer to be understood?

20. Can the saints know that we are praying to them?

21. Can you prove from the writings of the Fathers, that the saints can hear our prayers?

22. Can the saints, equally with the angels, know what passes on earth?

23. What authority have you for asserting that the angels and saints pray for us?

PRACTICE.

1. Honour the saints, and pay them particular devotion, especially the Blessed Virgin, and your patron saint.

2. Let not a day pass without recommending yourself to the protection of the saints, and every morning recite some prayer to them.

3. Remember, however, that the best devotion to the saints is the imitation of their virtues.

PRAYER.

O my God! Thou art wonderful in Thy saints, and Thy friends are exceedingly honoured in that sojourn of peace, where they are placed beside Thee. We shall, O Lord! pay Thy friends honour, repose our confidence in them, and endeavour to imitate their virtues. Henceforward, we shall celebrate their festivals by prayer, and frequenting the sacraments. O holy Virgin and Queen! O all you saints of God! pray for us, that, copying after thy example, we may be holy in every action of ours, and in every word and thought of ours. Amen.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON THE IMAGES AND RELICS OF CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS.

Q. Why do Catholics kneel before the images of Christ and His saints?

A. To honour Christ and His saints, whom their images represent. (Exod. xxv.)

1. Holy images are representations of "Christ and His saints," or of the historical parts of the sacred Scripture, picturing, in a striking manner what had been done and suffered by our Lord and His faithful servants, Jesus Christ is generally represented attached to the cross, or sitting with His disciples at the Last Supper. The Blessed Virgin is usually represented bearing the Child Jesus in her arms, or crushing the serpent under her feet, having on her head a crown of twelve stars. The saints are in most cases represented with circles of light, called *nimbi*, about the head, and a diadem surrounding the brow. There is often added something peculiar to the saint, and which serves to recall to our minds, either the virtues practised by him or the death suffered by him. St. Laurence, for example, is represented with a gridiron, to recall to our minds the nature of his martyrdom; and St. Sebastian with arrows fixed in his breast, for he was put to death by being shot at with arrows.

2. Catholics kneel before the "images of Christ and His saints," for the purpose of paying honour to Christ and His saints, who are represented by these images.

When we kneel before the image of Christ crucified, we honour and adore Him, who, through His great love for us, died nailed to a cross. When we bow or kneel to the images of the saints, our respect and reverence redound to the saints represented by these images. We kneel before images and pictures, not that we believe that these lifeless things possess any virtue or power, but on account of the originals which they represent. The honour is given to the original, and not to the image; so that by uncovering the head, or kneeling before an image of Jesus Christ, we honour and adore Jesus Christ Himself.

Q. Is it proper to show any mark of respect to the crucifix, and to the pictures of Christ and His saints?

A. Yes; because they relate to Christ and His saints, being representations and memorials of them. (Acts, xix. 2; Mat. ix.)

3. Yes; it is very "proper to show marks of respect to the crucifix and to the pictures of Christ and His saints," because the crucifix and the pictures "relate to Christ and His saints." When we have a real affection and esteem for another, our regard is not confined to his person alone, but naturally extends to everything that belongs to, or is connected with him. If we esteem and regard a just and kind sovereign, a public benefactor, or a faithful friend, do we not show every mark of respect to his picture? If a mother loses a darling child by death, does she not treasure the portrait or picture of that child, look at it again and again, and frequently kiss it and moisten it with her tears? If, therefore, we have a real esteem and affection for "Christ and His saints," we will be naturally forced to extend our esteem and affection to the picture of Christ crucified, and to the pictures of His saints. And we cannot have an esteem

or regard for these pictures, without showing outward marks of it, when an occasion presents itself.

4. But as the esteem and respect we show the picture or the memorials of a dear friend, is paid not to these objects, as considered in themselves, but because they are representations of, and have a relation to our dear friend; in like manner, the love and respect paid by us to the crucifix and the images of the saints, is not intended for these things considered in themselves, but is given only for the sake of those whom these images represent, and for the relation they bear "to Christ and His saints;" so that all the outward respect we pay to these things, is only a mark of the inward love, esteem, and veneration we have for those to whom they relate; and on this account it is that the respect we pay to these things is called *relative honour, relative worship.*

5. With regard to holy images, the Church, in the General Council of Trent, thus teaches: "Moreover, that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints, are to be had and retained, particularly in temples, and that due honour and veneration are to be given them; not that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them, on account of which they are to be worshipped; or that anything is to be asked of them; or that trust is to be reposed in images, as was of old done by the Gentiles, who placed their hope in idols; but because the honour which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which those images represent; in such wise, that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover the head and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ, and we venerate the saints whose similitude they bear." (Sess. xxv.) In the second Council of Nice, the Church condemned and excommunicated the heretics called *Iconoclasts*, because they would not reverence holy images, but profaned and trampled them under foot.

Q. Why do Catholics honour the relics of the saints?

A. Because their bodies had been the temples of the Holy Ghost, and at the last day will be honoured and glorified for ever in heaven.

6. A holy relic is anything that belonged to any saint of God, and now remains with us after the saint to whom it belonged has either departed out of this life, or is at a distance from us. "The relics of the saints" may be divided then into three classes. In the first class may be placed the body or any part of the body of a saint which remains with us after his soul has quitted this earth. Thus the head, the arms, the limbs, the feet, the hands, the ears, the mouth, the teeth, the flesh, the hair, are so many relics. In the second class may be placed those things that belonged to the saint in his lifetime, such as his books, clothes, or the like, but formed not a part of the saint's body, but only something that belonged to him. These also are esteemed holy, because they had relation to the saint; such was the rod of Moses, and the mantle of Elias the Prophet. In the third class are included things that did not belong to the saints, but only had touched their bodies, either in their lifetime or after their death; such are the aprons and handkerchiefs that had touched the body of St. Paul, and afterwards cured all diseases, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles.

7. The relics included in the first class—the bodies or parts of the bodies of the saints—are properly relics in the strictest sense of the word, and are considered as possessing in themselves a considerable degree of holiness, because they are the bodies or parts of those bodies which, sanctified by the superabundant graces of God, with which their souls were ornamented, "had been the temples of the Holy Ghost;" and as they had been united to those blessed souls now reigning in glory with Christ,

they will again be united, and "at the last day will be honoured and glorified for ever in heaven."

8. And "because their bodies had been the temples of the Holy Ghost, and at the last day will be honoured and glorified for ever in heaven," is the reason that "Catholics honour the relics of the saints." "The holy bodies of martyrs," says the Council of Trent, "and of others now living with Christ, which bodies were the living members of Christ, and *the temples of the Holy Ghost*, and which are by Him to be raised unto eternal life, and to be glorified—are to be venerated by the faithful, through which (bodies) many benefits are bestowed by God on men; so that they who affirm that veneration and honour are not due to the relics of the saints; or that these and other sacred monuments are uselessly honoured by the faithful; and that the places dedicated to the memories of the saints are in vain visited with the view of obtaining their aid—are wholly to be condemned, as the Church has already long since condemned, and now also condemns them." (Sess. 25.)

9. In the glorious days of the infant Church, the faithful applied to the sick the handkerchiefs and linens which had touched the body of St. Paul, and the sick were at once cured. But if God could give to mere linens which had touched the body of a saint the virtue of healing diseases, could He not give the same efficacy to the bodies themselves of martyrs and other saints? And not only could He, but He has actually done so. At all times, extraordinary favours have been obtained, and illustrious miracles have been performed by the relics of the saints. The history of the Church and the holy Fathers relate a great number of such miracles, the authenticity of which cannot for a moment be questioned. St. Augustin speaks in one of his works of the finding of the relics of St. Stephen, and of the miracles which were performed on that occasion. St. Jerome wrote an entire

book against Vigilantius, who was the first to deny honour to holy relics. One passage of the work has these words: "The devils, with which he (Vigilantius) is possessed, roar at the relics, and confess they cannot bear the presence of the martyrs." And in his fifty-third epistle, he writes thus: "You tell me that he (Vigilantius) vomits once more his poison against the relics of martyrs, calling us dust-worshippers and idolaters, for reverencing dead men's bones. Oh, unhappy man, who can never be sufficiently lamented!" In every succeeding age, up to our own time, "the relics of the saints" have been honoured. And if it be an error to pay that honour to them, it will follow that God Himself must have led us into it.

Q. May we then pray to the crucifix, or to the images or relics of the saints?

A. By no means; for they have neither life, nor sense, nor power, to hear and help us.

10. We cannot offer up our prayers to the "crucifix, or to the images or relics of the saints," because they are senseless things, which cannot "hear and help us." It is true we venerate and honour them, on account of their *relation* to Christ and His saints; but we never pray to them, nor beg their assistance, because we know they are unable to assist us. It may be said, that Catholics use often such peculiar and affectionate signs of respect towards crucifixes, holy images, and relics—such as embracing and kissing them—that one cannot help thinking that they are considered by them something more than senseless objects, and that they consider them not destitute of the power "to hear and help us." This is the argument made use of by the enemies of the Catholic Church, for the purpose of calumniating and rendering her detested. No matter how ardent and affectionate the signs of respect may be, which Catholics

show towards "the images and relics of the saints," they consider them only as objects without the power of hearing and helping us, but objects worthy of honour on account of their relation with Christ and His saints. To infer, then, that a Catholic believes an image or relic to have the power of helping us, because he pays external marks of respect to that image or relic in a very affectionate manner, is indeed *most uncharitable.*

11. Catholics neither adore, put their confidence in, nor pray to images or relics; and it certainly is very *unjust* to persist in saying that they *do so,* when all Roman Catholics unanimously declare that they abhor and detest such a thought, and that all they intend by such actions is to honour and reverence those sacred objects, which are representations and memorials of Christ and His saints. Every day we see Protestants showing marks of respect and regard to the pictures of their king or queen, or some deceased friend; but if these outward marks of respect were interpreted by Catholics as an acknowledgment that Protestants believed that such pictures had sense and feeling, would not they at once be branded as *vile calumniators?* Assuredly they would, and not without reason; for to conclude that these outward marks of respect arise from a bad motive, when both justice and charity combine to show that they proceed from a good motive—and of which the actions themselves are more susceptible than of a bad one—is, indeed, both unreasonable and unjust. Would any sane man charge Josue with superstition or idolatry, and with believing that an angel was his God, because, when he saw the angel, "he fell on his face to the ground and worshipped"? (Jos. v. 15.)

Q. Why, then, do we pray before the crucifix, and before the images and relics of the saints?

A. Because they enliven our devotion, by exciting pious affections and desires; and by reminding

us of Christ and His saints, they also encourage us to imitate their virtues and good works. (Ex. xxv. 18; St. John, iii. 14.)

12. We pray, dear children, "before the crucifix, and before the images and relics of the saints," because, by praying before these sacred images, our devotion is enlivened by the "pious affections and desires" which they excite; and from looking at the "crucifix and the images and relics of the saints," we are ever *reminded* "of Christ and His saints." The holy Council of Trent on this subject thus speaks: "And the bishops shall carefully teach this, that by means of the histories of the mysteries of our redemption, pourtrayed by paintings or other representations, the people is instructed and confirmed in (the habit of) remembering, and continually revolving in mind the articles of faith, as also that great profit is derived from all sacred images, not only because the people are thereby admonished of the benefits and gifts bestowed upon them by Christ, but also because the miracles which God has performed by means of the saints, and their salutary examples, are set before the eyes of the faithful, that so they may give God thanks for those things, may order their own lives and manners in imitation of the saints, and may be excited to adore and love God, and to cultivate piety." (Sess. 25.)

13. "The crucifix and the images of the saints" are, then, in the first place, like so many books which are suited to those who cannot read; for from them can be learned the history of religion and the principal mysteries. "Sacred pictures are books for the unlearned," says St. Gregory the Great; "we place them in the churches, that those who cannot read may behold on the walls that which they cannot learn from books." (Apud Guillon, t. xxiv.) "Sacred pictures and images," says the learned and pious Bishop of

Belly, "serve the purposes of books to the more instructed, as well as to the least, because they are calculated to excite in the minds of one and of the other, sentiments of true piety and of holy emulation."

14. In the second place, they excite in us "pious affections and desires" towards Jesus Christ, His blessed Mother, and the saints. People of the world procure the pictures of the persons whom they love, that the love and affection which they bear them may be nourished. And pious souls wish that there should be placed before their eyes the crucifix and the pictures of the saints, that the love which they bear God and the saints may always be kept alive; for nothing is better calculated to excite that love as "the crucifix and the images and relics of the saints." Let us suppose a succession of holy pictures suspended from the walls of a church or room, representing Jesus Christ born in a stable—adored by the Magi—presented to His Father in the temple of Jerusalem—conducted into Egypt by St. Joseph—fasting in the desert—preaching to the multitude—healing the sick—raising the dead—transfigured on the mountain—at the Last Supper with His Apostles—washing their feet and instituting the blessed Eucharist—agonizing in the garden of Gethsemani—betrayed by Judas—brought before the different tribunals—tied to a pillar and scourged naked—condemned to death by Pilate—carrying His cross up Calvary's hill—crucified between two thieves—buried in the tomb—arising gloriously from the dead—appearing to His disciples after His resurrection, and ascending into heaven—what a great many truths will be learned from so many pious pictures! Must not such representations *excite* in the hearts of all who look at and contemplate them, "pious affections and desires" towards God our Redeemer, who has done and suffered so much for our salvation?

15. If we suppose another line of pious images

representing the acts of virtues practised by the saints—St. Peter bitterly weeping for having denied Christ—St. Stephen falling on his knees when he was about to be stoned, to ask pardon for his executioners—St. Laurence suffering on a gridiron for his faith, and so of many others; what effect must the view of them have on the minds of Christians! Will they not at once admire the wonderful effects of grace, and will they not feel themselves *excited* to practise virtue, and to do everything in their power to imitate these great models of sanctity?

16. In the third place, the crucifix, holy pictures, and relics, "encourage us to imitate the virtues and good works" of Christ and the saints; for when we look on them, we immediately recall to our minds the life and actions of Jesus Christ and the saints. We begin to reflect on the great love and kindness of Jesus Christ towards us, on His goodness and patience, His charity and His humility; we also ponder on the virtues of the saints, their purity, their zeal, their disinterestedness, their submission under all trials and sufferings to the will of God; and thus meditating on the acts of those illustrious friends of Jesus Christ, we are induced "to imitate their virtues and good works."

Q. Is it not forbidden by the first Commandment to make images?

A. No; if we do not make them for gods, to adore and serve them as the idolaters do.

17. It is not forbidden by the first Commandment to make images, provided they are not made for the purposes of adoration. This is evident from several reasons. If the words taken from the book of Exodus: "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath . . . . thou shalt not adore them nor

serve them" (Exod. xx. 4), were intended to forbid the making of images of any kind, as they include every kind without exception, it would be unlawful to make any picture at all, because all are included, whether holy or profane; so that it would be a sin to make the picture of a friend, or to imprint the king's image upon coin, or to paint a horse, or a house, or any creature whatsoever. But no sane man ever imagined that the command extended to all this, for it would be the greatest folly to suppose that God prohibited the making of images in general. Neither are we prohibited by the first Commandment to make holy images; and for this clear reason, because God Himself absolutely commanded holy images to be made, as He said to Moses: "Thou shalt also make two cherubim of beaten gold on the two sides of the oracle; let one cherub be at one side, and the other on the other; let them cover both sides of the propitiatory, spreading their wings and covering the oracle." (Exod. xxv. 18.) In this passage we see, that holy images, or the likenesses of heavenly things, were made by the express command of God.

18. In the book of Numbers we find, too, that Moses was commanded by God to make a "brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign; that whosoever being struck (with the fiery serpents) shall look on it, shall live." (Num. xxi. 8.) This "brazen serpent" was a holy image, representing Christ upon the cross, as He Himself assures in the third chapter of the Gospel of St. John. Now, this is a manifest proof that the words of the first Commandment do not forbid the making of holy images, for if they were forbidden, God would never have commanded them on so many occasions to be made. Neither are we forbidden to use images for religious purposes; for God not only commanded the images of the two cherubim to be placed upon the mercy-seat, upon the ark of the covenant, which was

paying them honour, but He also made use of them for religious purposes; for He said to Moses: "Thence will I give orders, and will speak to thee over the propitiatory, and from the midst of the two cherubim." (Exod. xxv. 22.)

19. What is forbidden by the first Commandment is not, therefore, the *making of images*, nor the *honouring of images*, but the making of them "for gods, to adore and serve them as the idolaters do". That this alone is what is prohibited, is clear from the words of the command. For after forbiding to make the likeness of anything, &c., it is immediately added: "Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them," which words go to prove that the command only forbids the making of these things as idols, in order to be adored and served as if they were gods, or as if they had the power to see, hear, or help us.

20. To make images "for gods, to adore and serve," is the crime of idolatry—a crime that prevailed much when God gave His commands to the Israelites, and to which the Israelites themselves were very prone, as appears from their own history. Idolatry was always severely and signally punished by God, as we learn from the book of Exodus, where there is mention made of twenty-three thousand Israelites being put to the sword by the command of Moses, for their idolatry in worshipping the golden calf.

Q. When we prostrate ourselves before the cross, as is the custom on Good Friday, and kiss it, and make use of expressions to it, such as, *we adore Thee*, do we not consider it to be more than a mere creature?

A. No; we consider the cross, as we do every other sacred image, to have no power of seeing, hearing, or helping us.

21. The image of the cross on which Jesus Christ died, and the representation of the nails which pierced His hands and feet, and of the other instruments

of torture, are indeed objects well worthy of our veneration and respect. However, dear children, when we pay honour to these objects, when we prostrate ourselves before them, and kiss them, it is to Jesus Christ Himself that this homage and veneration is paid. When falling down before the cross, we use the expression "we adore Thee," our meaning is that we adore Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for our salvation.

22. Again, though some expressions in reference to the cross may occur in our Church hymns, which would seem to imply that we recognized in the cross the power of hearing and helping us, these expressions are not to be taken in their literal sense, but as tropes and figures which are peculiar to all poetical compositions; and it is unjust and uncharitable to conclude that the Church understands them in their literal sense (in which they are evidently false), and then fix a charge on her from such expressions, that she believes the cross to have the power of *hearing* and *helping* us. When St. Paul says: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. vi. 14); and when, in his epistle to the Ephesians, he says that Christ "reconciled man unto God in one body by the cross" (Ephes xi. 16), would it not be a ridiculous argument to conclude from these expressions that St. Paul was an idolater, or that he attributed to the material wood of the cross sense and power to help us? But if no sane person would urge such an argument against St. Paul, how can it be made use of against the Catholic Church, especially when, in all her catechisms and books of instruction, and upon every occasion, she indignantly rejects the charge that is attempted to be fastened upon her, and always protests against it as being a slanderous accusation?

23. Monsignor de Cheverus, preaching one day in the presence of many Protestants, on the adoration of the

cross, first laid it down as the true doctrine of the Church, that we adore only Jesus Christ, the Man-God; and that the honour we pay the cross is to be referred to Jesus Christ, who is represented on the cross as dying for us. He then went on in these words: "Suppose," said he to his hearers, "that some man with a generous and magnanimous soul, seeing one of you about to fall under the sword of an enemy, casts himself at once between you and the assassin, and by his own death saves your life; and that an artist struck with surprise at such an heroical act, draws the portrait of that noble and generous spirit, and presents you with the picture representing him bathed in his blood and covered with wounds—what should your first impulse be on receiving it? Why, you would at once fall on your knees with love and gratitude, passionately kiss it, and moisten it with your tears. But, my brethren, this just explains the doctrine of the Church in reference to the adoration of the cross. When we now look on the cross, and the figure on that cross, the mind discusses not, but the heart is full of love and gratitude, and cannot restrain its warm bursts of affection and tenderness." At these words the entire audience became affected, the preacher took up the crucifix, and the Protestants, forgetting their dry controversy, approached the cross, and with tearful eyes kissed it lovingly.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE RELICS OF ST. GENEVIEVE.

In 1129, in the reign of Louis VI., a pestilential fever, with a violent inward heat and pains in the bowels, and which was called *Des Ardents*, or the burning fever, swept off, in a short time, fourteen thousand persons, nor could the art of physicians afford any relief. Stephen, Bishop of Paris, with the clergy and people,

implored the divine mercy by fasting and supplications, yet the distemper did not abate, and God appeared inflexible. At length the shrine of St. Genevieve was carried in a solemn procession to the cathedral. During the ceremony, many sick persons were cured by touching the shrine; and of all that then lay ill of that distemper in the whole town, only three died, the rest recovered, and no others fell ill. Pope Innocent II. coming to Paris the year following, after having carefully scrutinized the miracle, ordered an annual festival in commemoration of it on the 26th of November, which is still kept at Paris. Since that time it is the custom, in extraordinary public calamities, to carry the relics of St. Genevieve, together with those of other saints, in a solemn procession to the cathedral. The present rich shrine of St. Genevieve was made by the abbot, and the relics enclosed in it in 1242. It is said that one hundred and ninety-three marks of silver and eight of gold were used in making it; and it is almost covered with precious stones, most of which are the presents of several kings and queens. The crown, or cluster of diamonds which glitters on the top, was given by Queen Mary of Medicis.—*Bollandus.*

ST. STEPHEN AND THE IMAGE OF OUR LORD.

The Emperor Constantine Copronymus carried on, for twenty years, a war against holy images, striving, in every way, to induce Catholics to give up honouring them. A great many suffered martyrdom sooner than abandon the holy practice of honouring and venerating images; but among the others was St. Stephen the Younger. The emperor cited him to his presence, and when he stood before him the prince asked him if he still persisted in his idolatry? The saint fixed his eyes on the ground and made no answer. The emperor casting on him a scornful look, said to him: "Wretch, why is it that you give no answer?" St. Stephen replied: "If you are resolved to condemn me, order me off to punishment; if you are willing to judge me, calm down your passion, for the laws of the country require this." The emperor then said to him: "You are idolaters; you adore matter." "We adore Jesus Christ," said St. Stephen, "when we pay honour to the image which represents Him; we honour the saints when we pay marks of respect to their images, whilst you call them idols and trample them under your feet; whilst you outrage and burn them." "Do you believe," said the emperor, "that we trample on Christ by trampling on His image?" "God forbid," said the martyr. Then taking a piece of money in his hand, on which was stamped the image of the emperors, he asked those who were present: "Whose image is this on this coin?" They answered: "The image of the emperor and that of his son." "What treatment should he receive," said St. Stephen, "who should trample upon

that image?" They all cried out that he should be severely punished, as it bore the image and the name of the emperor and that of his son. "Is it then so great a crime," said the saint, "to insult the image of the emperor of the earth, and no crime to trample under foot, and to cast into the fire the image of the King of heaven and earth?" Some days after this examination, the emperor sent an order that he should be scourged to death in prison. They who undertook this barbarous execution left the work unfinished. The tyrant hearing that St. Stephen was yet alive, cried out: "Will no one rid me of this monk?" On this, certain courtiers stirred up a mob of impious wretches, who, running to the jail, seized the martyr, dragged him through the streets of the city with his feet tied with cords, and many struck him with stones and staves, till one despatched him by dashing out his brains with a club. The rest continued their insults on his dead body till his limbs were torn asunder, and his brains and bowels left on the ground.—*Cedrenus and Theophanes.*

THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUE CROSS.

St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, out of a desire of visiting the Holy Places at Jerusalem, undertook a journey into Palestine in the year 326, though she was at that time near eighty years of age. On her arrival at Jerusalem, she was inspired with a great desire to find the identical cross on which Christ had suffered for our sins. But there was no mark or tradition, even amongst the Christians, where it lay. The heathens, out of their great hatred of Christianity, had done everything in their power to conceal the place where our Saviour was buried. They had heaped upon it a great quantity of stones and rubbish, and they also built over it a temple to Venus, that those who came thither to adore Him might seem to pay their worship to a marble idol representing this false deity. They had, moreover, erected a statue of Jupiter in the place where our Saviour rose from the dead. Helena being willing to spare no pains to compass her pious design, consulted all the people at and near Jerusalem, whom she thought likely to give any assistance in finding out the cross. She was informed, that if she could find out the sepulchre, she would likewise find the instruments of torture; it being always the custom among the Jews to make a great hole near the place where the body of the criminal was buried, and to throw into it whatever belonged to his execution. The pious empress therefore ordered the profane buildings to be pulled down, the statues to be broken in pieces, and the rubbish to be removed. The excavation having been made to a considerable depth, the holy sepulchre

was discovered, and near it were extended three crosses, and there also lay the nails which had pierced our Saviour's body, and the title which had been fixed to the cross. That one of these crosses was the one they were in quest of there appeared no reason to doubt; but which of the three it was could not be ascertained, as the title was found separate from the cross. In this perplexity the holy Bishop Macarius, knowing that one of the principal ladies of the city lay extremely ill, suggested to the empress to cause the three crosses to be carried to the sick person, not doubting but God would discover which was the cross they sought for. This being done, St. Macarius prayed that God would have regard to their faith, and after his prayer, applied the crosses singly to the patient, who was immediately and perfectly recovered by the touch of one of the three crosses, the other two having been tried without effect. St. Helena, full of joy for having found the treasure for which she had so earnestly sought, built a church on the spot, and placed it in that church with great veneration, having provided an extraordinary rich case for it. She afterwards carried part of it to the Emperor Constantine, then at Constantinople; another part she carried to Rome, to be placed in the church which she built there, called the Holy Cross of Jerusalem. The main part of the cross St. Helena enclosed in a silver shrine, and committed it to the care of St. Macarius. St. Paulinus relates, that although chips were almost daily cut off from it and given to the devout, yet the sacred wood was not thereby diminished. It is affirmed by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, twenty-five years after the discovery, that pieces of the cross were spread all over the earth. He compared this wonder to the miraculous feeding of five thousand men, as recorded in the Gospel.—*Alban Butler.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. In what way are Jesus Christ and the saints generally represented?

2. How do we honour Jesus Christ and His saints in kneeling before their images?

3. If we esteem and love a person, must we esteem and love what relates to him?

4. Is it for themselves alone we respect images?

5. What are the words of the Council of Trent with regard to holy images?

6. Into how many classes are the relics of the saints divided?

7. Why are the relics of the first class strictly called relics?

8. What says the Council of Trent about the relics of the saints?

9. Was due honour paid to holy relics in the first ages of the Church.

10. Do Catholics pray to sacred images and relics?

11. Is it not unjust to charge Catholics with praying to images and relics?

12. What does the Council of Trent say of the images of Christ and His saints?

13. What does St. Gregory say of pictures and images?

14. How do the crucifix and the pictures of Christ excite in us holy desires?

15. How do the images of the saints excite us to piety and virtue?

16. How are we encouraged to imitate the virtues of Christ and the saints by looking at their pictures?

17. How do you prove that we are not forbidden to make images?

18. Did God ever order the making images for religious purposes?

19. What is it, then, that is forbidden by the first Commandment?

20. What do you call the crime of making images to adore them?

21. When we say "we adore thee" to the cross, do we actually adore it?

22. How do you prove that it is unjust to charge us with idolatry from the expressions used towards the cross?

23. Relate the circumstance attending the sermon of Monsignor de Cheverus.

PRACTICE.

1. Ever entertain the greatest respect for the images and relics of the saints, whether they are placed in the church or in private houses.

2. When looking on the crucifix, ponder on the sufferings which Jesus Christ underwent for your salvation.

3. Have the image of the suffering God frequently before your eyes, and in particular when you are at prayer.

PRAYER.

Pardon us, dear Lord, for the little respect that we have hitherto paid to Thy image and the images of Thy saints. Henceforward we

shall often look up at the crucifix, and looking on it we shall entertain our mind with Thy sufferings and sorrows. The images and relics of the saints we shall venerate and esteem, for they have a relation to Thy friends who are now honoured by Thee in heaven, and who are unceasingly offering up their prayers to Thy throne in our behalf. Mother of God and saints of God pray for us. Amen.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON SUPERSTITION.

Q. Is there anything else forbidden by the first Commandment?

A. Yes; all dealings and communications with the devil, and inquiring after things lost, hidden, or to come, by improper means.

1. "The first Commandment" forbids not only all *idolatrous* practices, but also all *superstitious* practices, and everything like "dealings and communications with the devil." *Superstition*, taken in its general sense, means a turning away from the true and living God, and having recourse to the devil for help instead of seeking it from Him. It is a withdrawing oneself from the providence of God, and from the ordinary means appointed by Him for gaining any good thing we want, and confiding in the assistance of the devil, by using means appointed by him for obtaining what we wish to possess. But *superstition*, as it is usually understood, means a false notion of religion, which fills us with a foolish and excessive confidence in certain things, or which inspires us with a frivolous and excessive fear of some other things as being endowed with a supernatural

virtue which they have not, or possessing it in a greater degree than they do in reality.

2. *Superstition* is clearly opposed to "the first Commandment." By the first Commandment we are obliged to acknowledge God as our Sovereign Lord, and consequently to fear only Him, and in Him alone to place all our trust. But to hope for or fear any supernatural effects from things not appointed by God for obtaining them, or to attribute to certain things a greater supernatural virtue than God has given them, would be, so far from fearing God, and from placing our trust in Him alone, fearing the creature and placing our confidence in the creature, and that would be imperfect idolatry.

3. Almighty God has appointed two different ways of assisting us in our necessities. The one is by *natural* means; thus—medicines are appointed by God as the natural means for recovering health; food is appointed by Him as the natural means of supporting life; prudent examination and reflection is appointed by Him to find out the truth of these things that it is well that we should know. The other way is by *supernatural* means; thus—prayers, and particularly the prayers of the Church, whether applied to us immediately or by means of those creatures which she blesses for that purpose, are appointed by God as supernatural means for procuring for us many good things both of soul and body. Fasting and alms-deeds are, too, appointed by God as means for obtaining His mercies and favours. So also the holy relics of the saints are often, through His infinite goodness, made the means of procuring for us many advantages; as also other pious practices which the holy Church approves of, and which we may lawfully and laudably perform, that we may bring down upon our affairs the heavenly blessings of our Lord. But if to obtain things which we desire, we use means which are not possessed of any natural virtue for giving them, and are not appointed by God nor approved by His

Church as supernatural means for that purpose, all such means are *superstitious*, and strictly "forbidden by the first Commandment."

4. "All dealings and communications with the devil," in order to arrive at a knowledge of what concerns ourselves or others, are the most detestable practices of superstition, and have been again and again denounced and severely punished by God. Of those who hold "dealings and communications with the devil," some have an express compact with the devil, according to which he requires certain conditions on their part, which conditions are always injurious to the majesty of God and destructive to their own souls. On his part, the devil engages that whenever such and such things be done, or such and such words spoken, or such and such observations be made, as he and they agree upon, he will then do what they desire of him, and produce the effect required. Others have not this express compact with the devil himself, but only learn the things, words, or signs agreed upon between him and those who had the express compact with him, from those persons who know what these things, words, or signs agreed upon are; but at the same time they know that these things, words, and signs have been appointed by the devil, and that the effects produced by them are done in reality by him.

5. Others again learn the various means agreed on to be used for obtaining the desired effects, as secrets of nature, as hidden mysteries; they know nothing of the compact originally entered into with the devil, though they have very strong suspicions that the means used have proceeded from him. There are many who thus have an indirect communication with the devil, as the use of the means originally fixed on has been handed down through different generations long after the compact had been entered upon, though the memory of the compact is lost. There are more again who, having heard these things as merely useful secrets, may use

them in their simplicity, not in the least thinking that they who use these means are guilty and detested by God. All those belonging to the two first classes mentioned above, are called in Scripture witches, wizards, sorcerers, magicians, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, diviners charmers, and enchanters.

6. "Inquiring after things lost, hidden, or to come, by improper means," such as these mentioned, is certainly, an open violation of "the first Commandment." The Scripture speaks in the severest terms of all such means for discovering what is lost or hidden or unknown, and threatens those who practise them with very signal punishments. In the book of Leviticus we read: "A man or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or is a wizard, dying let them die; they shall stone them; and their blood shall be upon them." (Lev. xx. 27.) In the same book we find that all persons are forbidden, under the severest penalties, from holding any communication with those who use those superstitious practices: "Go not aside after wizards, neither ask anything of soothsayers to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God . . . The soul that shall go aside after magicians and soothsayers, and shall commit fornication with them, I will set my face against that soul, and destroy it out of the midst of its people." (Lev. xix. 20.) St. John tells us that "sorcerers shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone." (Apoc. xxi. 8.)

7. That God has severely punished those who hold "dealings and communications with the devil, inquiring after things lost, hidden, or to come," we find it recorded in the holy Scriptures; and many examples there are of such punishments being inflicted on them. In the book of Kings we are told that when Ochozias, King of Israel, fell sick, he sent to Accaron to consult the god of the Philistines about his health, but Elias the Prophet came to him in the name of God, and said: "Thus saith the Lord: Because thou hast sent messengers to consult

Beelzebub, the god of Accaron, as though there were not a God in Israel, of whom thou mightest inquire the word, therefore, from the bed on which thou art gone up thou shalt not come down, but thou shalt surely die." (4 Kings, i. 16.) And he did die as the prophet foretold. Many other examples there are of the fatal consequences which this vile superstition draws after it; for it usually happens that those who use superstitious means for recovering their health, instead of reaping any benefit from such means, die of that very disease, or if they recover from it some greater evil befalls them.

Q. Is it also forbidden to give credit to dreams, to fortune-telling, and the like superstitious practices?

A. Yes; and all incantations, charms, and spells, all superstitious observances of omens and accidents, and such nonsensical remarks, are also very sinful.

8. "To give credit to dreams," or to allow our actions to be regulated by dreams, by persuading ourselves that from them we know certainly what is to happen, and how our affairs are to succeed, is a very superstitious practice, and strictly forbidden by God. To attach importance to dreams argues in us folly and silliness equally as impiety. Must not every sane man admit, that dreams and the idle fancies which come into our heads in sleep proceed from the constitution of our bodies—from the humours, indigestions, and the like by which the body is afflicted—from the fumes of what we had been eating and drinking, or from the thoughts which engaged our minds on our retiring to sleep. And such being the case, is it not absurd to take them as pointing out what is about to happen to us, or to consider them a rule by which to regulate our acts? This is it that made the wise man say: "Dreams lift up fools. The man that giveth heed to lying visions is like to him

that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind . . . . . What truth can come from that which is false? Deceitful divinations and lying omens, and the dreams of evil doers, are vanity . . . . for dreams have deceived many, and they have failed that put their trust in them." (Eccles. xxxiv. 1.) The impious Manasses, King of Juda, was guilty of the superstition of giving "credit to dreams," and with this crime and the practice of others like it, he is reproached in Scripture. "Giving credit to dreams" has been condemned by many councils; and a council held in Paris in the year 820, says that crediting dreams is a relic of paganism.

9. However, it is not "forbidden to give credit to dreams" when there are good grounds for thinking that they come from God; for often dreams do come from God. In the Old Law particularly, God was pleased to make known His will to His servants by means of dreams, for in the Old Law He had not so fully revealed the divine truths to mankind as He has done in His Gospel. And so we find mention made in the Old Testament of the dreams of Jacob, Laban, Joseph, Pharaoh, Nebuchodonozor, Daniel, the three wise men; and in the New Law we read of the orders of God made known to St. Joseph in a dream. Almighty God, in the book of Numbers, says: "If there be among you a prophet of the Lord, I will appear to him in a vision, or I will speak to him in a dream." (Num. xii. 6.) And in the book of Samuel, we are told that Saul "consulted the Lord, and He answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by priests, nor by prophets." (1 Sam. xxviii. 6.) Historians relate many conversions effected by means of dreams or supernatural visions. Eusebius tells us that Arnobius was often urged in his dreams to examine closely into the evidences of the Christian religion, for which, up to that time, he entertained no other sentiments than those of hatred and contempt; and that he did so; and his prejudices giving way to the light of

reason and the proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion, he abjured paganism, and embraced the religion of Jesus.

10. But it must not be forgotten that, as we see from the examples above, when God makes known His will to men by dreams, they always were either great saints or prophets, or people in a public character; and that His will was made known to such, not on account of trifling, unimportant matters, but for some great object that had reference to the public good. For, it nowhere appears that He communicated His will by dreams to ordinary mortals, and for objects of everyday occurrence. And fearing that others should be induced "to give credit to dreams," God makes an express and general law that no one should give credit to them: "Let there be none among you that observeth dreams . . . for the Lord abhorreth all these things." (Deut. xviii. 10.) But this general prohibition did not make the servants of God let pass unheeded the manifestations of His will when communicated to them in dreams; for these dreams were accompanied with such peculiar circumstances, as to prove that they certainly came from God. For the subject proposed in the dreams to the servants of God was invariably good; the manner in which it was proposed decent, distinct, and unequivocal; and peace, humility, fervour, and piety were consequent on those dreams.

11. There are many who believe that the very contrary of what they dream of will certainly take place; and this notion of dreams is indeed ridiculous and foolish in the extreme. If they dream of gold or silver, they think they will be poor and wretched; if they have pleasing and happy dreams, they are, they say, to meet with difficulties and trials during the day; if they dream of a friend being happy, he is soon, they imagine, to die. Can there be a greater absurdity than this?

12. "Fortune-telling," though, alas! a very common

practice now-a-days, is strictly forbidden by God. *Fortune-tellers* are generally gipsies or idle strollers, who go about the country imposing on the credulity of the people, by pretending that they know the past, present, and the future, and that they can tell things the most hidden and secret. The means used for *telling fortunes* is sometimes what is called "cutting cards," other times "reading cups," but in general *fortunes are told* without having recourse to any external means. In order to know hidden things, or things to come, many devices, suggested by the devil himself, are practised by those who call themselves Christians! At one time melted lead is cast into water, and from the figure it then makes, ridiculous inferences are drawn. At another time persons winnow corn in the barn on All-Hallow Eve, to know one's future husband. In these and similar practices is it not quite manifest that there is not the smallest natural connexion between the thing done and the end proposed? And as it is certain that these practices were never appointed by God as means to know what may be wanted, nothing, therefore, can be known by such practices; or if anything be known, the knowledge must come from the devil; and whoever makes use of such means, expecting to obtain through them the knowledge of things hidden or to come, goes to the devil for such knowledge either directly or indirectly.

13. A great many will say as a plea for doing these things, that amusement and fun is the only object they have in view. But such should recollect that very often what begins in amusement and play ends in earnest; and the cases are not few where persons became convinced that they could, undoubtedly, tell what would happen by using such means, and often found from the use of these superstitious practices, that their predictions had been verified. And the reason is this, that the devil is connected with these things, for God allows such interference on the part of the devil, in punishment of the

crime of those who use them. "It happens, sometimes," says St. Augustin, "that through the illusions and the deceit of the fallen angels, and through many superstitious means, that several things past and to come are told and foretold, and do not happen otherwise than they are foretold. And when persons find that their observations hit and come to pass, this heightens their curiosity, and entangles them more in the snares of a most pernicious error." (L. ii. de Doct. Christ.)

14. Other superstitious practices, such as "incantations, charms, and spells," are, too, strictly forbidden by the first Commandment. *Incantations* or *enchantments* are superstitious practices made use of for the purpose of procuring some ill to others—to bewitch them—to make them fall into diseases or into poverty—to torment them with pains—to hurt their cattle—to kill them—to excite them to carnal love—to inspire them with hatred, and the like. These practices arise from a compact with the devil, and, as such, are frightful abominations; for, besides the superstition they contain, they are grievous sins against charity and justice. The Scripture everywhere condemns *incantations* or *enchantments:* "A man or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or is a wizard, dying let them die; they shall stone them; and their blood shall be upon them." (Levit. xx. 27.) And in the book of Deuteronomy we read: "Neither let their be any wizard, nor charmer, nor any one that consulteth pythonic spirits, or fortune-tellers, or that seeketh the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth all these things, and for these abominations He will destroy them at His coming." (Deut. xviii. 9.)

15. "Charms and spells" are certain words, sentences, or things, used by superstitious people to procure health for a man or beast, to preserve them from some particular evils with which they may be threatened, or to obtain some advantage or other—such as sewing certain things in one's clothes, pronouncing certain words, tying

things about some parts of the body, carrying papers about one with certain unknown names and figures written on them, for the purpose of curing, for example, the tooth-ache. Using *sacred things* to produce an effect which they have no power to produce, either from nature or God, or from any blessings of the Church, is also detested by God, and forbidden by His holy law. It is superstitious to recite prayers, though good in themselves, in a certain posture, and for a certain determined number of times, believing by these means that we will infallibly be preserved from sickness, or that our health will certainly be restored.

16. Certain verses of Scripture written in a certain figure with other unknown characters, and sewed in one's clothes, as a certain means to ward off sudden death, is certainly superstitious, and a "charm" under the cover of piety, introduced by the devil, who can transform himself into an angel of light, in order to deceive and ruin easy and credulous souls. "Philosophize as long as you please upon them," says St. Chrysostom, "and tell me that you call upon God and do nothing else, and that the old woman you make use of is a Christian and Catholic. I tell you it is idolatry and a charm; and no doubt sometimes the devil makes use of the appearances of piety to hide his treachery, and give poison in honey." (Lib. ii. de Doct. Christ. c. 20.)

17. It is also a superstitious practice to believe that those who carry about them the Rosary or Scapular, or such marks of piety, shall never be damned, or at the hour of death they certainly shall repent and have the benefits of the sacraments, although they have neglected them all their lives. "The vanity and superstition of those is abominable," says the Council of Cambray, held in the year 1565, "who for certain promise themselves that they shall not depart this life without penance and the sacraments, because they have a devotion to this or that saint; who place a security in the things they carry

about them, and think that they shall certainly have the success they desire; and whatever else of this nature is made use of and believed." The devotions of the Rosary and Scapular are undoubtedly good and laudable; and so, too, is the practice of carrying about us relics, or St. John's gospel, the image of Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, or any of the saints, provided all this be done with a pious attention, without placing in them a certainty of salvation, which is certainly unwarrantable, and not approved of by the Church.

18. "All superstitious observances of omens and accidents" are again strictly forbidden by the word of God, and *are very sinful.* To mention the many ways by which persons are guilty of this sin of "superstitious observance of omens and accidents," and regulating their actions accordingly, would be endless. It is superstition to believe that I shall have ill-luck if I stumble on the threshold as I go out of the house, or if I put on my right shoe first, or if I meet with a man with one eye, or one that is sick and lame. It is superstition to believe that some misfortune shall befall me if I should meet a magpie on the road, if a hare crosses my path, or if a crow should croak from the house-top. It is also superstition not to begin a journey, or to commence any business upon days that are considered unlucky, and particularly that day of the week on which the feast of Holy Innocents falls that year—not to get married on Friday, or in May or August, such times being supposed to be unlucky. Now, what power have these things to forebode good or bad luck? Surely, none. They have no power of themselves nor from nature, nor much less any power from God. They have no power, then, at all; and consequently observing these things and regulating our actions accordingly, is no less folly and credulity than sin.

19. If superstitious people will say that they know

from experience that their *observances* of things are not vain but well grounded, such may be the case in their regard, who allow themselves to be influenced by such idle fears, for it may happen that God permits for their punishment, that through means of the devil these things may have an evil influence. It is, indeed, hard to account for the way in which some people act and speak. There is certainly but one thing that can bring us ill luck or make our affairs go wrong, and that one thing is sin. And yet a great many people have no concern about it; and the very first thing they do in the morning is to call on the devil to take themselves or their families, or to wish bad luck to themselves or their affairs, and yet they have no fear of any evil consequences from their cursing, whilst from some little mistake or foolish occurrence they are terrified, lest some evil come upon them. This is, indeed, strange! Does not the Scriptures tell us that "If God be for us, who can be against us"? And, "That all things work together for good to them that love God."

20. "And such nonsensical remarks" as those of which we have spoken above, "are also very sinful." As, for example, that it is unlucky to pair one's nails or comb one's hair on Fridays, or wash linen on such and such days. To present one with a penknife, some will say, is unlucky, for it cuts friendship; if a grave be made on such a day, another will say, a great many will die that year in the parish; if we have rain on St. Swithin's day, many will say, we will have rain every day for forty days. To enumerate all the other "nonsensical" and superstitious "remarks" that are made every day, would be endless. The observance of lucky and unlucky days is a superstition that is derived from the ancient pagans, and even in the time of the Apostles began to creep in among Christians. It was for this that St. Paul, in writing to the Galatians, says: "You observe days, and months, and times, and years; I am

in fear for you, lest, perhaps, I laboured in vain amongst you." (Gal. iv. 11).

21. St. Chrysostom, in his homily against those that observed new moons, says: "It is the greatest madness to expect that your affairs for the whole year should be successful, because you began them on such a day. Nay, it is not only madness, but an argument of a strange diabolical impulse, to attribute the prosperity of our life to the occurrence of a certain day, and not to our own care and industry. A day is not lucky or unlucky of its own nature, for one day differs not from another, but it becomes such by our own industry or our sloth. If you employ it in virtue, it will be a lucky day, and merit a reward from God; if you spend it in wickedness, it will be an unlucky day, and deserve His anger and punishment." Oh, how misguided are many Christians! They will make no difficulty in marrying contrary to the laws of the Church, which is offensive to God, and which will be the cause of much misery and unhappiness in the marriage state; and they will not marry in the break of the moon, because the devil suggests that their marriage will be unhappy if they do so. Surely, this manner of acting must be most offensive to God. Regard not, then, good and bad omens, lucky and unlucky days, for these are relics of paganism, and the pomps and snares of the devil. Beware of the devil in all shapes, and never build an assurance of salvation upon any particular form of prayer.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE EMPEROR COMENUS.

During the painful disease of which the Greek Emperor, Comenus, died, the Patriarch, Theodosius, earnestly exhorted him not to lose time in settling the affairs of his kingdom, and making arrange-

ments about his youngest son, Alexius. But the emperor made answer, that he had received an assurance that he was to live fourteen years more, and that his informant was one whose word could not be questioned, as he was an astrologer. As his malady appeared not to abate, but rather increased from day to day, he gave up all hope of living much longer, repented of his superstition, settled his affairs as well as his situation would allow him, and yielding to the advice and counsel of the patriarch, he detested and bewailed his superstition, and a short time after died.

THE SUPERSTITIOUS WIDOW.

A widow, advanced in years, became one day dangerously ill. Her daughter earnestly implored of her to have the priest sent for that she might receive the last sacraments of the Church; but she made answer that there was no necessity. The daughter spoke to a friend in the neighbourhood on the subject, and asked the person to unite her entreaties with her own, in inducing her mother to have the priest sent for; but the old woman answered, laughing: "Fear not; I am not going to die yet. The cuckoo has prophesied that I have twelve years more to live." There are some who think that the number of years they will have to live will be in exact proportion to the number of continued notes they have heard from a cuckoo. As she was every day getting worse, the daughter sent for the priest at last. The priest came at once, but when he entered the house the old superstitious woman was without sense or feeling, and remained so until she died.—*Lohn, Bibl.* iii. 559.

NERO THE PERSECUTOR.

The Emperor Nero had scarcely passed his thirtieth year when he consulted the oracle of Delphos, to know how long he had to live. He was told, in answer, that he should have some fear for himself in the sixty-third year. Interpreting this answer in the worst sense, he committed the most arbitrary acts, and gave himself up to the most revolting excesses. He commenced a persecution against the innocent professors of Christianity. Not content with the usual instruments of death, he invented new tortures and new modes of killing to torment and terrify. But soon the vengeance of God overtook him; he was abandoned by his own followers, was obliged to fly, and at last closed the horrors of his bloody reign by putting an end to his own existence in the prime of life.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What do you mean by superstition, both in general and in particular?
2. How is superstition forbidden by the first Commandment?
3. In how many ways can we be assisted in our wants?
4. Are there any who enter into an express compact with the devil?
5. Who are those who indirectly hold communication with the devil.
6. How do you prove that inquiring after things lost by superstitious means is strictly forbidden by God?
7. Mention some instances in which God has severely punished those who held communications with the devil.
8. Is it great folly as well as impiety to give credit to dreams?
9. Is it always superstitious to believe in dreams?
10. How can we know when we are to attach importance to dreams?
11. Are there persons who infer the very contrary of what they dream?
12. What means have some persons recourse to in order to tell fortunes?
13. Do many things foretold come to pass?
14. What do you understand by incantations or enchantments?
15. What do you mean by charms and spells?
16. Mention the other practices of superstition, and what is said of them by St. Chrysostom.
17. Is it superstition to believe that wearing the Scapular will prevent a person from being damned?
18. What are some of the ways in which we sin by vain observance?
19. Is not vain observance of this sort unmeaning and criminal?
20. Mention some of the nonsensical superstitious remarks that are sometimes made.
21. What does St. Chrysostom say of vain observances?

PRACTICE.

1. Never have any commerce with the devil, or any society with him, directly or indirectly, recollecting the words of St. Paul,

that "we cannot drink of the chalice of the Lord and that of the devil."

2. Never observe dreams, nor use charms for medicines, to cure diseases either in man or beast.

3. Beware of the devil in all shapes, nor ever regard good and bad omens, lucky and unlucky days, for these are relics of paganism, and the pomps and snares of the devil.

PRAYER.

Lord of heaven and earth! we have our entire dependence upon Thee, for all we have and for all we hope; and therefore as we have our whole confidence in Thee for all we want through Jesus Christ, our only Redeemer and Mediator, we will not abandon Thee, and enter into the society of the devil by consulting fortune-tellers, or using tricks and charms. In Thee alone are all our hopes, and to Thee alone we will have recourse in all our necessities both spiritual and temporal. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON ANIMAL MAGNETISM AND ON SACRILEGE.

Q. Is the practice of animal magnetism or mesmerism superstitious?

A. As yet there is no certain evidence to show that the practice of animal magnetism is superstitious.

1. "Animal magnetism or mesmerism," as it is commonly called, is a theoretical agent of a peculiar nature, and is supposed to be capable of producing the most powerful effects, in some mysterious way, on the human body. This so-called science is of recent discovery. Its inventor was Anton Mesmer, who studied physic at Vienna, and took his degree of doctor of medicine in the university of that place, in the year 1776. Whilst at Vienna he became acquainted with a Jesuit, Father

Hehl, who had great faith in the influence of the loadstone on human diseases, and had invented steel plates of a peculiar form, which he impregnated with the virtues of the magnet, and applied to the cure of diseases. From him Mesmer learned the art of using the magnet in the cure of diseases; and having left Vienna, and travelled for some time in different parts of Germany and Switzerland, continuing everywhere to work wonderful cures, he at last set out for Paris, where he arrived in the year 1778. Here his success in curing patients was very great, and a society was actually formed for purchasing his secret.

2. Mesmer and his followers on the Continent, and most of those who have practised *mesmerism* in these countries, have produced its effects by placing themselves near to the individual to be *mesmerised*, and making downward passes with their hands over him, without touching him, but looking him at the same time intently in his face. This is said to affect the individual in a space of time varying from two or three minutes to half an hour. However, Mr. Braid, a surgeon, residing in Manchester, in the course of his inquiries, found that a second individual was not necessary to the successful development of mesmeric phenomena, and that by causing a person to sit still and simply directing his attention, by means of the eyesight, to some particular object, all the effects of the passes and of the intense looking of the operator could be produced. Many theories have been propounded in order to embrace the facts of animal magnetism.

3. Mesmer and his immediate followers attributed them to the action of a subtle fluid in the bodies of animals, which enabled them to exercise an influence on each other at a distance, just as a magnet affects iron; hence he called it *animal magnetism*. This hypothesis of a nervous fluid susceptible of being influenced, and producing an influence more or less modified, has been

adopted by most writers on *mesmerism*, till the appearance of the experiments made by Surgeon Braid. The mesmeric state having been produced by Mr. Braid, it is said, without any influence from a second person, he accounts for the phenomena by supposing that there is "a derangement of the cerebro-spinal centres and of the circulatory and respiratory and muscular systems, induced by a fixed state, absolute repose of the body, fixed attention, and suppressed respiration, concomitant with that fixity of attention." He further adds, that in all cases he believes "that the whole depended on the physical and psychical condition of the patient arising from the causes refered to, and not at all on the volitions or passes of the operator throwing out a magnetic fluid, or exciting into activity some mystical universal fluid or medium."

4. The effects of the *passes* or fixed attention, on persons of nervous susceptibility, are various. There are different stages or degrees in reference to the effects produced by *mesmerism*. The person mesmerised completely has his eyes closed and his senses lulled, and yet he speaks and acts—he answers the questions proposed him, and manifests an intelligence and knowledge of which before he gave no proofs; and no sooner has he got out of that mesmeric trance or state, than the knowledge displayed previously at once departs.

5. To what, though, are we to attribute this strange state effected by *mesmerism?* Are we to consider it as a natural result of the process applied, or are we to attribute it to the intervention of the demon? We cannot, indeed, state that *mesmeric* influence proceeds from the intervention of Satan, for there are no grounds for such an assertion. There are, without doubt, a great many mesmeric facts which are the result of juggling and deception; but, at the same time, there are others which are attested by men of learning, intelligence, prudence, and probity, and which—though we cannot show how, or by

what means—would appear to us not to depart from the class of physical and psychological facts.

Q. Has not the Holy See been consulted many times on the use of animal magnetism, and have not many answers been given on the subject?

A. Yes, the Holy See has been consulted more than once.

6. These years past the Holy See has been often consulted on the practice of animal magnetism, and more than one answer has been returned. In the year 1840, the following question was addressed to his Holiness:—"Most Holy Father, N. N. supplicates your Holiness, for his own instruction and the direction of his conscience, as well as for the direction of the souls of others, that you would deign to inform him whether or not it be lawful for penitents to take part in the operations of magnetism." On the 23rd of June of the same year, the General Congregation of the Inquisition returned this answer:—"That, excluding everything like error, magic, invocation of the devil, either explicit or implicit, the mere act of employing physical remedies in every other respect licit is not morally prohibited, provided it does not tend to a wicked or illicit end in any way whatsoever. With regard to the application of principles and means purely physical to things and effects truly supernatural, an explanation of them on physical grounds is nothing more or less than a cheat, both unlawful and heretical." This answer would seem to recognize the existence of "animal magnetism," and the salutary effects of its influence in combatting the maladies to which human nature is subject. A second answer, given by the Holy See on the 21st April, 1841, says that the exercise of *magnetism*, such as it has been explained, is illicit; but in the case laid down and proposed, in order to be solved, it was said, that in the operations of "animal magnetism" there was observed a proximate occasion of unbelief and immorality.

7. On the 19th of May, 1841, the following case was laid before the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Penitentiary, by the Bishop of Lausanne, and an answer supplicated :—" Seeing that the answers hitherto given on animal magnetism are insufficient, and as it is greatly to be wished that we should be able to decide at once and uniformly on the cases which so often present themselves, the undersigned lays before your Eminence the following circumstances, which are these: A person *magnetized*, and who generally is of the feminine sex, enters into such a state of sleep or lethargy, called *magnetic somnambulism*, that the greatest noise made in the ears, not even the report of fire-arms, can arouse her from that dormant state. The magnetizer alone, who has obtained her consent (for consent is necessary), makes her fall into a state of ecstacy, either by gesticulations or *passes*, if he be near her, or by a mere interior command, if he be some distance—even many leagues removed. Then interrogated, orally or mentally, on her malady and on those of persons absent, who are absolutely unknown to her, the person mesmerized, and who was well-known to be previously ignorant, becomes at once gifted with science far beyond that of medical men. Her anatomical descriptions are perfectly exact; she points out the seat, the cause, the nature of the internal diseases of the human frame, even of those most difficult to be known and characterized; she details the progress, the changes, and the complications of the disease; and all this in the most technical language. Often she foretells its precise duration, and prescribes for it the most simple and effectual remedies. If the person for whom the subject of mesmerism is consulted be present, the mesmerizer places him or her so near as to come in contact with her. If the person be absent, a lock of her hair is placed as a substitute, and that answers the purpose. No sooner has the lock of hair been brought in contact with

the hand of the person magnetised, than she tells what it is; to whom it belongs; where the person to whom it belongs actually is; how employed; under what malady the person labours; she enters into the details of the malady, and all this with as much precision as if she were making a *post mortem* examination of the body. The person magnetized does not even see with her eyes. Let her eyes be bandaged, and she will read—if reading it can be called—even a book or a manuscript that may be laid, open or closed, on her head or on her stomach, though previously uninstructed. Awakened from this state, whether by the command exteriorly expressed or inwardly signified, of the mesmerizer, or of her own accord, at the moment announced by her, she appears completely ignorant of all that happened during the process, no matter how long it might be, and of all that she went through. Her mind does not retain the slightest knowledge, nor her memory the least trace of all that occurred. The Bishop of Lausanne and Geneva, having strong reasons for doubting that such effects—produced by an incidental cause, that evidently has so little connexion with them—are purely natural, demands, if, supposing the facts related be true, a confessor or a curé can, without danger, permit his penitents or his parishioners: 1. to practise animal magnetism, thus described, as if it were an auxiliary and supplemental art of medicine; 2. to allow themselves to be cast into this state of magnetic somnambulism; 3. to consult, either by themselves or through others, the person so magnetized; 4. to do *any one* of these three things—having previously made a formal renunciation in their hearts of everything like a compact with the devil, whether explicit or implicit, and of every sort of satanical intervention—as, notwithstanding all renunciation of a compact with the devil, some persons have obtained, through magnetism, either the same effects, or at least

some of them—." The answer of the Sacred Penitentiary, given on the 15th of July, 1841, was, that the practice of magnetism, as stated and described in the document, is illicit.*

8. This answer, replete with wisdom and prudence, and nearly the same as the second answer already spoken of, resolved not the question definitely. The meaning of the answer is simply that *if things were such as the person who forwarded the question* to the Sacred Penitentiary *believed and narrated*, such practices are not permitted. But are the facts, as detailed by the person who submitted the case, entirely true? Are they quite certain? Even the warmest supporters of magnetism, at least the majority of them, consider the facts, as submitted to the Sacred Congregation, chimerical and illusory. But if the case stated be false, if it be unfair, the decision given on it cannot be brought forward as a conclusive answer against animal magnetism.

9. Some time later, in July, 1842, Mgr. Gousset, Archbishop of Rheims, having consulted the Holy See on the subject, to know if every abuse being laid aside, animal magnetism was permitted, and having forwarded all the documents which could throw light on the matter, the Grand Penitentiary writes: "That it would require a great deal of time to answer the question, and that an answer now may be without any decisive result, because the question has not yet been sufficiently examined, and the Holy See does not wish to be committed in the matter." This answer was communicated by the cardinal archbishop to the clergy of his diocese, then assembled to perform the duties of a spiritual retreat.

10. Eighteen months later, the archbishop having, from time to time, pressed the Holy See for an answer,

* Sacra Pœnitentiaria, mature perpensis expositis, respondendum censet, prout respondet usum magnetismi prout in casu exponitur non licere. Datum Romæ, die 15 Julii, 1841. C. Card. Castracane.

received the following letter from his Eminence the Cardinal Castracane, Grand Penitentiary:—"My Lord—I have learned that your lordship expected from me a letter informing you whether or not the Holy Inquisition has decided the question of magnetism. I pray of you, my lord, to take into consideration that the question is of such a nature that it cannot be decided all at once, *if it ever be so, because no risk is incurred by deferring the decision of it,* and that a premature decision may compromise the honour of the Holy See; that whenever there had been a question of magnetism and its application to *some particular cases,* the Holy See has not hesitated to pronounce its opinion, as can be seen by the answers which appeared in the public journals. But the question now is not, if in this or that case magnetism be permitted, but it goes farther, and requires that we should examine if the use of magnetism can be reconciled with faith and morality. The importance of this question cannot escape either your sagacity or the extent of your information."

11. The inference deduced from what has been said is, that magnetism, considered as a science, has not been condemned, and so that it is tolerated. Of the many effects produced by it, there are undoubtedly many that are astounding and extraordinary; but it has never been proved that they are to be attributed to the intervention of the devil. We cannot, it is true, give a satisfactory scientific explanation of them, but is not all nature full of mysteries which escape all man's searching inquiries?

Q. Can the practice of animal magnetism be absolutely and unconditionally permitted?

A. The practice of animal magnetism cannot be permitted except under certain conditions, and attended with certain precautions.

12. On this subject we shall give the opinion of Cardinal Gousset, in his own words: "In saying that the

practice of animal magnetism is allowed, we take as granted: first, that the magnetizer and the person to be magnetized are in good faith, and that they look on animal magnetism as a natural and useful remedy; secondly, that nothing will be allowed by either party which could in any way wound Christian modesty, and that everything like communication with the devil will be renounced. If these conditions be not observed, and these precautions not taken, persons practising animal magnetism cannot be absolved." (*Theol. Morale*, t. 1, p. 79.) The Abbé Maupied pronounces the practice of animal magnetism very dangerous to morality, as also injurious to bodily health; and that in a great many cases serious accidents resulted from it. And R. Debreyne, in his *Essay on Moral Theology*, says, that from the relations which he has heard in reference to mesmerism, it could be made the means of the most revolting crimes.

Q. What do you think of theatrical representations, and of other amusements, particularly at *wakes*, in which religion, its ministers, and sacred ceremonies are ridiculed?

A. They are impious and highly criminal, and strictly forbidden by the first Commandment.

13. By the first Commandment is strictly forbidden *sacrilege*, or whatever tends to bring contempt, insult, or *ridicule* on the religion of Christ, its ministers, its temples, its sacred things or its holy ceremonies; for sacrilege is an abuse or profanation of holy things. By *holy things* is meant whatever is set apart to be employed in the service of God, and not used for worldly purposes.

14. Under the denomination of holy or sacred things, there are, first, *holy persons*, who on account of the sacred character they bear, being *ministers* of *religion*, and deputed for the service of God and His Church, are

considered *holy*, and these are ecclesiastics and religious. There are, secondly, *holy things*, and they are the sacraments, the sacred vessels, and sacred ornaments, and the like, employed in the service of God, as also the holy oils and other things specially blessed by the Church for God's honour and service. There are, in the third place, *holy places*, which are churches, chapels, monasteries, cemeteries, and other religious houses set apart for God's service. Now, when any contempt, *ridicule*, or irreverence is shown by us either to *holy persons*, such as the ministers of religion; or to *holy things*, and the "sacred ceremonies" of religion; or to *holy places*, either in the thing done, or in the manner of doing it, or by using them for worldly purposes—for which they were never intended—we are guilty of *sacrilege*, or a profanation of holy things; and acting in this way is "impious and highly criminal."

15. With regard to *holy persons*, sacrilege is committed when we strike them; for beating them is a great contempt and irreverence to their sacred character; it is also sacrilege to commit sins of impurity with any persons consecrated to God by vows of chastity. With regard to *holy things*, sacrilege may be committed in many ways. To administer or receive any of the sacraments in the state of mortal sin, is a sacrilege—to show disrespect to the Holy Eucharist, is a sacrilege—to convert the holy oils or sacred vessels to profane purposes, or to touch them without necessity—to use sacred ornaments for worldly purposes—to show disrespect to the Holy Bible or to holy images and relics, such as throwing them on the ground in contempt, trampling them under foot, and the like—to sell holy things as *holy things*, that is, requiring more for them than their material value, on account of their being consecrated or blest—to rob or steal church furniture, destined for the service of God—all such are sacrilegious acts, "and strictly forbidden by the first Commandment."

16. Wearing priestly ornaments—making use of the liturgy of the Church, or of the words of the Holy Scripture, and adopting the "sacred ceremonies" of the Church at "theatrical representations and other amusements," for the purpose of bringing *ridicule* on them, by exciting the beholders to mock, jeer, and laugh at them, are also sacrilegious, most "impious and highly criminal." To go through, by way of mockery, the marriage ceremony, at *wakes*—to represent the priest assisting at the marriage—to repeat the words such as are said by parties being married—to place the ring on the finger—all this is most sacrilegious and scandalous, and a crime "strictly forbidden by the first Commandment."

17. With regard to churches and *holy places*, sacrilege is committed when they are robbed, or maliciously burned and destroyed, or when, contrary to the end for which they were intended, they are converted into places for buying and selling, gaming, drinking, or other profane uses of that nature.

18. That Almighty God detests sacrilege, and has severely punished those who have brought into contempt or shown irreverence to holy persons, places, or things, is easily proved from His sacred writings. With respect to sacred persons, we read in the book of Kings, that when Zacharias, the son of Joiada the priest, reproved king Joas for his impiety, the king's servants collected around him, and stoned him at the king's command, in the court of the house of the Lord. "And when he was dying, he said, The Lord see, and require it. And when a year was come about, the army of Syria came up against Joas, and they came to Juda and Jerusalem, and they killed all the princes of the people. . . . And on Joas they executed shameful judgments. And departing they left him in great diseases. And his servants rose up against him, for revenge of the blood of the son of Joiada the priest, and they slew him upon his bed, and he died. (2 Chron. xxiv.)

19. With regard to *holy things* and sacred vessels, we find in many parts of Scripture frequent examples of the hatred in which God held all profanation of them, and of the severity with which He punished those guilty of that profanation and irreverence. We read in the book of Chronicles, that Ozias, the king, elated with his victories, "neglected the Lord his God, and going into the temple of the Lord, he had a mind to burn incense upon the altar of incense." The priests opposed him, as their duty required of them; but "Ozias was angry, and holding in his hand the censer to burn incense, threatened the priests. And immediately there arose a leprosy in his forehead.....and they made haste to thrust him out....And Ozias the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and he dwelt in a house apart, being full of leprosy." (2 Chron. xxvi. 16.) And we read in the book of Kings, that when the Philistines, after the victory they gained over the Israelities, took the ark of the Lord, carried it away in triumph, and placed it in the temple of their idol Dagon, the idol was fallen next morning, and broken to pieces before the ark; and "the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them, and he destroyed them, and afflicted them with emerods.....And there was the confusion of great mortality in the city.... and there was the fear of death in every city, and the hand of God was exceedingly heavy.....and the cry of every city went up to heaven." (1 Kings, v. 2, 6.)

20. As to *holy places* and churches, it appears from many passages in Scripture that God requires that every respect should be paid them, and that a want of reverence and respect for them has met with His severest chastisements. In the book of Exodus we read that God commanded Moses and Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and feet when going into the tabernacle of the covenant: "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet when they are going into the tabernacle of the testimony, and when they are come to the altar

to offer on it incense to the Lord; lest perhaps they die." (Exodus, xxx. 19.) And in the book of Machabees we read that when king Antiochus resolved to bring over the Jews to his pagan rites, he defiled the temple of God, and filled it with riots and revellings, and began to persecute the Jews. And from that time forward we are told that all his affairs went wrong, his armies were beaten, his cities taken, and that himself, returning from an unlucky expedition into Persia, "the Lord, the God of Israel, that seeth all things, struck with an incurable and invisible plague . . . . . worms swarmed out of his body, and while he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell off, and the filthiness of his smell was noisome to the army, and no man could endure to carry him for his intolerable stench." (2 Mach. ix.) And when he entered into himself, and began to remember all the evils he had done at Jerusalem, he promised to repair all damages, and to adorn the temple with rich gifts, and to multiply the holy vessels; but all to no purpose. Almighty God would not accept these offerings from his sacrilegious hands, and "he died a miserable death, in a strange country, among the mountains." (1 Mach. vi.)

21. But it is particularly to be remembered that Jesus Christ Himself, though He bore all His own sufferings with the most amazing patience and meekness, yet when He saw the temple profaned, He was inflamed with the greatest zeal, and manifested His displeasure in a very marked way on two occasions. "When He went up to Jerusalem after the marriage of Cana in Galilee; and He found in the temple them that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And when He had made, as it were, a scourge of little cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep also, and the oxen, and He poured out the changers' money, and the tables He overthrew. And He said to them that sold doves: Take these things hence, and make not

the house of my Father a house of traffic." (John, ii. 13.) He reproved the world, indeed, for many sins, but He would punish with His own hands none but sacrilege. He refused to be judge in parting the inheritance between two brothers; He refused to judge the woman taken in adultery; but when He witnessed the temple of God profaned, He took upon Himself immediately to be both accuser, judge, and executioner.

22. You see, then, dear children, how great is the evil of profaning the house of God, and how displeasing and disrespectful it is to Him to engage yourselves whilst in it, in anything except in praying to Him, and praising Him, and thanking Him for His many favours and graces bestowed on you, and in listening to His words proceeding from the mouth of His minister. To amuse yourselves in church, to speak there on worldly business, to look about to see and be seen, is offensive to God, and will, sooner or later, bring upon you His displeasure and anger. "Have you not houses of your own to eat and drink," says St. Paul, "and do you despise the church of God?" (1 Cor. xi.) "The Lord is in His holy temple," according to the prophet Habacuc; "let all the earth keep silence before Him." (Hab. ii. 20.)

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

MESMERISM INVESTIGATED.

The established Faculty of Paris, finding themselves completely eclipsed by the extraordinary success of Mesmer, whom they considered either as an impostor or an enthusiast, made a remonstrance on the subject to the Court. The remonstrance was attended to, and produced the appointment of a set of eight commissioners, of whom the most effective were five members of the Academy of Sciences—Bailly, Le Roy, De Boey, Lavoisier, and Franklin. Franklin took the lead in the inquiry, for which he was peculiarly adapted by his acute and powerful understanding; and to him, in conjunction with

his colleagues, we are indebted for one of the most valuable specimens of scientific research that is to be met with in the history of philosophy. The first object of the commissioners was to make themselves acquainted with the facts; and as the operations of animal magnetism were at that time solely directed to its power of curing diseases, they limited their inquiries altogther to this point. Mesmer was too haughty or too prudent to hold any communication with the commissioners; but his pupil, Deslon, who probably possessed more candour and more credulity, did not hesitate to disclose the mysteries of his art, and even admitted the philosophers to witness his operations. When more than one patient were brought through the magnetising process, and when the effects were observed, the commissioners fully convinced themselves that, whatever was to be regarded as the cause, the effects were really such as had been represented, and that at least, in a great majority of cases, the *crises* were actually produced upon the patients, and were not counterfeited by them in order to serve the purposes of the magnetizer.

But upon what principle did this extraordinary power act? Was the effect produced by a physical agent, or through the medium of the imagination? To be able to solve this difficulty, they determined to repeat the process of magnetizing precisely as it was performed by Mesmer, but in such a manner as to divest it of all those circumstances which might be supposed to affect the minds of the patients. In the first place, they allowed themselves to be magnetized by Deslon; they submitted to every part of his process, and repeated it for a sufficient number of times, but without any crisis being produced. From these trials they concluded that the magnetic influence had no action upon the body while in a state of health; they, therefore, proceeded, in the next place, to examine its effects upon individuals labouring under disease. For this purpose a certain number of patients that had on former occasions experienced the *crisis*, were removed from their usual place of exhibition to a more private situation, and were again magnetized, under the care of Deslon himself. Other individuals, labouring under similar diseases, who had not before been operated upon, were likewise magnetized; and the general result was that Deslon's patients were alone affected, and these in a much less degree than when they had been operated upon on former occasions, surrounded by a number of people, and placed in circumstances calculated to excite their feelings. As a further experiment, they selected a certain number of individuals, who, on previous occasions, had been found most susceptible of the influence of animal magnetism, had their eyes bandaged, and then subjected to the magnetic process. Under these circumstances it was found that when the patients were no longer able to see what was going forward around them, they frequently fell into the *crisis*

when the process had not been gone through; and at other times when it had been gone through, but without their being conscious of it, they did not experience the usual convulsions. The conclusion come to was, that mesmeric effects were caused by the imagination; and Bailly, in giving a summary view of the labours of the commissioners, concludes his address in the following words: "Man possesses the power of acting upon his fellow-creatures, of agitating their nerves, and of even throwing them into convulsions; but this action is not to be considered as of a physical nature. We cannot perceive that it depends upon any communicated fluid, but it appears to be entirely of a moral nature, and to operate through the medium of the imagination."

THE PUNISHMENT OF HELIODORUS.

When Heliodorus came to Jerusalem to rob the temple, and could not be induced to desist from his wicked purpose by the high priest Onias, who told him that the money had been deposited in his hands for the benefit of the poor widows and orphans, the whole city was flung into the greatest consternation. The people, with Onias at their head, fled for refuge to the throne of God, and besought Him not to suffer His sanctuary to be plundered of its treasures. Their prayer was heard. Heliodorus advanced as far as the entrance of the temple, fully determined to seize by force the riches it contained. The soldiers who presumed to obey him, were, by the power of God, suddenly struck with dread, which cast them to the ground; for there appeared to them a man on horseback, clad in golden armour, and the horse on which he sat reared and struck Heliodorus with his fore-feet, while two comely young men, in rich attire, standing on either side, scourged him incessantly with rods that they had in their hands, and Heliodorus suddenly fell to the ground, and by the power of God lay speechless and without all hope of recovery, until he afterwards was saved from death by the prayers of Onias, the high priest.—*Machabees.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What are the particular circumstances connected with the life of Mesmer?
2. Describe the process of mesmerism.
3. To what is the mesmeric state to be attributed?
4. What effects are produced by mesmerism

5. Are mesmeric effects in any way to be attributed to the demon?

6. What answers were given in reference to mesmerism by the Holy See in the years 1841 and 1842?

7. Mention the particular case forwarded to Rome by the Bishop of Lausanne.

8. Was the answer given in that case decisive as to mesmerism?

9. What answer was returned by the Holy See to the Archbishop of Rheims?

10. What was the answer given by Cardinal Castracane on the urgent solicitation of the Archbishop of Rheims?

11. What is the inference from what has been said on magnetism?

12. What are the conditions required in order that the practice of mesmerism should be tolerated?

13. What do you mean by sacrilege?

14. Who and what are included under the name of sacred things?

15. How is sacrilege committed with regard to holy persons and holy things?

16. In what way is sacrilege committed at wakes and plays?

17. How is sacrilege committed with regard to churches?

18. Cite an example of the manner in which God has punished sacrilege committed against sacred persons?

19. In what way has God punished those who profaned sacred vessels?

20. How was Antiochus punished for profaning the temple of God?

21. How did Jesus Christ punish those who profaned the house of God?

22. How should we conduct ourselves in church?

PRACTICE.

1. Never allow yourself to be brought through the process of animal magnetism or mesmerism, for the experiment is dangerous for many reasons.

2. Never encourage or be present at those impious plays which take place at wakes.

3. Always entertain the greatest respect for the ministers of God, and for everything connected with God's temple.

PRAYER.

O Jesus! if at any time we have sinned against Thee, by disrespecting Thy sacred ministers, or profaning Thy holy sacraments, we

now crave Thy pardon. We freely confess that hitherto we often insulted Thee by our levity and worldly conversations in Thy churches; but now learning the enormity of our conduct, and the frightful chastisements which Thou hast inflicted on all those who have profaned Thy temples, we promise that evermore we shall respect the sanctity of Thy house, and whilst there be solely engaged in praising and blessing Thy holy name. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ON RELIGION AND ON OATHS AND VOWS.

Q. Say the second Commandment.

A. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

1. The second Commandment given by God to Moses, and which appears in the book of Exodus, is: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain." (Ex. xx. 7.) In the book of Deuteronomy the Commandment is thus expressed: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for he shall not be unpunished that taketh His name upon a vain thing." (Deut. v. 11.)

From the words of this Commandment we see that God is most jealous of His honour, and that He strictly requires of us to respect and revere His holy name, and never, on any account, to profane it, or take it in vain. The duty of paying respect to the name of God naturally arises from the first Commandment; for if we believe that God is all-powerful, all-wise, all-good—that He is our Creator and Sovereign Lord, and that He can do with

us what He pleases—if we are filled with love and gratitude towards Him for His many gifts and graces bestowed upon us, should we not hold in the greatest veneration His sacred name, and carefully avoid the dishonouring or "taking it in vain."

Q. What is commanded by the second Commandment?

A. To speak with reverence of God, of His saints and ministers, of religion, its practices and ceremonies, and of all things relating to the divine service.

2. We are, dear children, "commanded by the second Commandment" to speak in the most reverential way of God at all times. His infinite perfections demand this from us. He is all-just, all-wise, all-holy, all-good. He has conferred on us every grace and favour—to Him we are indebted for all that we have and are, and so should we not always honour and revere Him, and speak of Him in the most respectful terms, and with a solemnity of tone and manner? "Of His saints" we should "speak with reverence," because they are God's special friends, and are now surrounding His throne in heaven, and are continually employed in blessing and praising His holy name. They are, also, our friends, and are always pleading our cause before God, offering up their prayers to Him for us, and most desirous that we should be one day united with them in heaven. As the particular friends of God, and as our intercessors with Him, we should never, dear children, speak of the saints except in the most reverential way; we should never mention their names or speak of their acts and words whilst in this world, in a tone of levity or in a jesting manner, but in a way that may redound to their honour and to our own edification. How reprehensible, then, must the conduct of those persons be, who, when the

extraordinary actions of the saints are spoken of, and mention made of their great austerities and severe watchings and fastings, shrug their shoulders, and indicate by their manner that they consider the saints' works and words a subject more for ridicule than for praise and edification.

3. Of "God's ministers" we should also speak with reverence. They are, dear children, selected by God to be the guardians of our souls—to them our spiritual interests are intrusted—they are our pastors and guides, to support us, and point out the way to heaven—they are the fathers and keepers of our souls—and as they are our pastors, and guides, and fathers, should we not speak of them with all due reverence, and kindness, and affection? For what child would be justified in any attempt to throw ridicule on his teacher and father? The *ministers* of God are destined by Him to be public ambassadors of the whole Church, to honour Him, and to obtain His graces for all the faithful. No dignity can excel the dignity of the *ministers* of God. St. Thomas says, that the dignity of the priesthood surpasses even that of the angels; and St. Gregory Nazianzen has said, that the angels themselves venerate the priesthood. St. Francis de Sales, after having given the order of priesthood to a holy ecclesiastic, perceived that on going out he stopped at the door as if to give precedence to another. Being asked by the saint why he stopped, he replied that God favoured him with the visible presence of his guardian angel, who before he had received the priesthood always remained at his right and preceded him, but afterwards walked on his left and refused to go before him. It was in a holy contest with the angel that he stopped at the door. St. Francis of Assisium used to say that, "If I saw an angel and a priest, I would bend my knee first to the priest and then to the angel." As the dignity of the *ministers* of God is so grand, and their privileges so glorious, we should on all occasions, dear

children, treat them with the highest respect, and ever speak of them with the deepest reverence.

4. "Of religion, its practices and ceremonies," we too are obliged by the second Commandment to speak with the greatest reverence. The subject of our holy religion should never be introduced into conversation except in a serious and earnest manner—it is too sacred a matter for us ever to trifle with. Everything connected with our holy religion, its practices and ceremonies, should meet with reverence and attention at our hands. We should hold them in the greatest esteem, for even the very least *ceremonies* and most trivial practices of the Church cannot be looked upon as anything small, for they are all connected with the service of God. We should never, dear children, be ashamed to speak of those *practices* of our holy religion; for our religion is our glory and happiness, and no human respect, or what others should think of us, should ever cause us to turn away from even the slightest of its observances. There are many, surely, that speak in a tone of mockery of our kneeling and bowing to the image of our Lord, and of our making the sign of the cross on our foreheads; but we should never join such persons in their impious and irreligious remarks, but ever uphold the sanctity, holiness, and propriety of all the practices of our holy Church.

5. "All things relating to the divine service" should be dear to us, and not a single expression should ever escape our lips that may in any way tend to lessen that respect which our religion claims from us. Our words should show that we not only profess our holy religion, but that we have a sincere love and affection for it; that we are true children of the Church, and that nothing could induce us to compromise in the least the duties we owe it. *Of everything* belonging to our religion let us speak with respect and devotion; and though the ignorant may sneer at us, and the foolish

may scoff, let us always bear in mind that the slightest ceremony and the least observance of our religion is most pleasing to God, and that when we speak with *reverence* of them, we edify our neighbour, and give glory to our Creator.

Q. What else is commanded by the second Commandment?

A. To keep our lawful oaths and vows.

6. Together with speaking with reverence of God and His saints, the second Commandment requires of us to "keep our lawful oaths and vows"—to observe what we lawfully *swear* or *vow* to do, or avoid. An *oath* is a calling upon Almighty God to witness the truth of what we say, and to punish us if what we say be false. There are many circumstances in life in which one man has a just and perfect right to know the truth of any matter from another; but when we consider the wickedness of the heart of man, and our propensity to lie, and particularly so when our own interests and selfish views are in question, we cannot put our trust in the mere word of another, particularly where it may be against his interest or reputation to tell the truth. On the other hand, as one cannot see into another's heart to know what passes there, it was necessary to have recourse to some certain way which might be depended upon, in order that others may not in the least doubt, but be firmly convinced that what we say is true. Now, as God is the infallible truth, and cannot deceive or be deceived, as He is the great searcher of all hearts, and hates and detests all lies, and will punish all who are guilty of them, for "lying lips are an abomination" to Him; therefore, it was judged that there could not be a greater security for a man's telling the truth, than when he solemnly called upon the Almighty

—for whom he should entertain the greatest veneration and dread—to witness what he said, and to punish him if he said what was false. Again, there are many circumstances in life in which a person is obliged, or binds himself, to do some service to another at some future time, and yet that other cannot rely on his simple promise. In this case, also, the calling of God to witness that one will perform his promise, and if he do not perform what he promises, to punish him, gives the greatest security that can be required that the promise will be performed.

7. There are, then, two kinds of oaths, the one an *affirmative* oath, by which a person swears to the truth of what he asserts; the other a *promissory* oath, by which one swears to fulfil, at some future time, what he promises to do. There is also an oath called *imprecatory*, which is taken when a person expressly calls on God to punish him unless he do such a thing, but an imprecation, as we have already seen, is included in the *affirmative* or *promissory* oath, though it be not formally expressed.

8. We can call God to witness the truth of what we say, either by Himself or by any of His creatures. We swear by God Himself when we say: "God is my witness," "So help me God," "I swear by the Almighty." We swear by any of His creatures when, for example, we say: "I swear by heaven," "I swear by the cross of Christ," "Let the angels and saints be my witness," "I swear by my soul." Swearing by any of God's creatures, in which His goodness and power shine forth in a special manner, is a true oath, and the same thing, in substance, as swearing by God who made these creatures. So to swear by heaven, is to swear by Him who made heaven; to swear by the cross, is to swear by Him who died on the cross; to swear by the saints, is to swear by Him whose temples the saints are; to swear by one's soul, is to swear by Him who made our souls; and so of

other creatures, at least of those in whom the perfection of God shine out in a conspicuous manner. It is in this sense that we are to understand such oaths, and this is the meaning that Jesus Christ Himself attaches to such oaths, for He says: "Whosoever shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it and by Him that dwelleth in it; and he that sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon." (Matt. xxiii. 21.) To swear by any mean or insignificant creature, in which God's perfections are not seen in an especial manner, as, for example, by one's hat or shoe, would not be considered an oath, but rather a mockery. To swear, or call God to witness the truth of what we say, it is not necessary to pronounce any words. An action or sign, expressive of one's intention to call on God as a witness, suffices to take an oath; as, for example, when one extends his hand and looks up to heaven, or when the hand is laid on the Gospel or on one's breast.

9. *A vow* is a *deliberate promise* made to God to do something that is good or more agreeable to God, or to abstain from something that is bad or less pleasing to God, and that for His honour and glory. A *vow* is a *promise*, and therefore differs from a *resolution*, for a *resolution* is only a real *design* to do what we judge to be for our good and agreeable to God, or to abstain from what we know to be evil and dangerous to our souls—it only signifies the present intention of the will to do anything without being *obliged* to continue in that intention, and which intention we may alter and change as we please without sin; but a *vow*, besides declaring the present intention, imposes an obligation to continue in that intention, and to fulfil, in action, what we had promised to do for God's great honour and our own advantage.

10. From this it will be seen that—first, a *promise* made without an intention of imposing an obligation, is

not a vow; secondly, the promise, though made with the intention of imposing an obligation, must be *deliberate*, because, for a *vow*, the perfect use of reason and free will are necessary; that is, the person who makes it must be aware of what he is doing, and what obligation he is bringing on himself; thirdly, the promise must be *made to God*, because it is an act of religion by which we honour God, dedicating our will and liberty to His service in the thing we *vow*. And so a vow made to any saint is a vow made to God in honour of that saint, in the same way as altars and churches dedicated to any saint are dedicated to God in honour of that saint. Fourthly, the promise must be of something *good or more agreeable to God*, and which is possible to be done; for as by a *vow* we intend to honour and please God, what we promise must, therefore, be not only possible, good in itself, and more agreeable to Him that we do it, than that we do it not, or that we do the very opposite; for a promise made to God of doing anything trifling, or indifferent, or evil, or impossible, would be mocking and dishonouring God, rather than pleasing Him, for the Scripture says: "A foolish promise displeaseth God." (Eccles. v. 3.) Hence, alms-deeds, fasting, praying, can become matter for a vow, because the performance of these things is more agreeable to God, and more advantageous to ourselves, than the nonperformance of them. If the object of a vow be indifferent, or an inferior good, the *vow* is invalid, unless circumstances render its performance more perfect than the omission of it.

Q. Is it pleasing to God to bind ourselves by vows?

A. Yes; undoubtedly, if they be made with discretion, and after due deliberation.

11. A *vow* being a promise willingly made to God to practise some good work, as, for example, to observe chastity, to pray, to fast, and the like, it certainly must

be pleasing to God to make "vows." In the first place, "vows" are agreeable to God, because it is of great advantage to our souls to make *vows*. When we make a *vow*, we place ourselves under a holy necessity of doing good. The fickleness of our mind is fixed, our good resolutions are confirmed, and we become steady and resolute in the performance of our duty. Again, when we bind ourselves by a *vow* to do any good, we show a greater readiness to serve God, a greater devotion and affection to Him. We show that we are really determined to please Him. And also, when we *vow* to do something good, we make a greater offering to God than could be done by the performance of the good thing without the *vow;* for when we *vow* to do something good, we give God not only the good action, but also our very liberty itself.

12. Persons the most remarkable for sanctity, have made "vows." We find, in the life of St. Teresa, that she bound herself by vow to perform her actions in the most perfect manner in which she could. St. Liguori made a vow never to spend unprofitably a moment of his life. But, as the obligation of vows is very serious and heavy, we should never make a vow except after mature reflection and deliberation. There are some who inconsiderately make vows, and the consequence is that the vows are either soon broken or that years and years are allowed to pass away without their being fulfilled. Prudence requires that we should never make a *vow* without consulting our confessor; and if any one finds that he will scarcely fulfil a vow that he has made, he should procure a commutation from the bishop, or from a confessor who has power to commute vows.

Q. How many sorts of vows are there?

A. There are three sorts of vows: real vows, personal vows, and mixed vows.

13. *Real* vows are those, the matter of which is

something external and appreciable; for example, "I promise God to give a hundred pounds of my estate to the poor;" or "I promise to God to bestow a chalice on the Church." In this case the hundred pounds or the chalice is the matter of a vow, and if I do not give the money or the chalice, my heirs are obliged by my vow to do so. *Personal* vows are those by which we promise God to do something pleasing to Him, and regard the persons who make them; for example, "I promise God to fast for eight days, and to hear Mass every day for a month." *A mixed* vow is both personal and real, as when I promise to God to visit the sick, and to aid them by my money.

14. A vow is again either *absolute* or *conditional*. *Absolute* vows are those, the obligation of which depend not any condition; for example, "I promise God never to enter a spirit shop on any account, because I have frequently got drunk." *Conditional* vows are those which depend on a certain condition; for example, "I promise to give twenty pounds in charity, if I succeed in this lawsuit." That is a conditional vow; for in that I should be bound by it, I must gain the lawsuit.

15. Vows are also either *solemn* or *simple*. *Solemn* vows are those which are solemnly made in a religious order approved by the Church, such as the Order of the Trappists and the Carthusians, and also that of the Ursulines, Carmelites, &c. The solemn vows made by these religious are chastity, poverty, and obedience, and they are binding for life. *Simple* vows are those which are taken privately, and which are not recognized by the Church as solemn, nor attended with any prescribed formalities.

Q. Are we obliged to fulfil our vows?

A. Most certainly; and it would be a very great sin to break them.

16. If we be obliged, in strict justice, to perform

those contracts, and promises, and engagements, made to men like ourselves, how much more obliged are we to fulfil our engagements and promises to God? We have His express command to be exact in fulfilling the vows which we make to Him: "When thou hast made a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not delay to pay it, because the Lord thy God will require it; and if thou delay, it shall be imputed to thee for a sin." (Deut. xxiii. 21.) And St. Paul assures us, that those widows who have been consecrated to God by a vow of chastity, and afterwards marry, have "damnation, because they have made void their first faith." (1 Tim. v. 12.) As a vow induces so strict an obligation, young people in particular ought to be very cautious in making vows, especially such as are perpetual. They should reflect for some time on the great obligation that the vow imposes, try themselves well, and, above all, use every means they can to know if it be the will of God that they should so bind themselves. They should do nothing rashly, but take advice in every step they take with those who have the charge of their souls.

Q. Can a vow be changed or dispensed in?

A. Yes; a vow can be changed or dispensed in by the Pope, or by one's own bishop.

17. To *dispense* in a vow is to take away the obligation which a person had contracted in making that vow. To *commute*, or change a vow, is to change the good work which one had bound himself by vow to perform, for some other good work. We have seen before that a vow is a promise made to God to do good of some kind specified. And as he who makes such a promise may be placed in such circumstances that he cannot accomplish the good without committing a sin, or without omitting some other good equally important and more urgent; in such a case, there is a

necessity that he be dispensed altogether from such a vow, or that he perform some other prescribed good in place of that he vowed to do.

18. The Pope, in virtue of his supreme authority, can dispense in all sort of vows (and, of course, commute them), when there is a just cause for so doing; and he has this power in any or every place, because his jurisdiction is universal. He alone can dispense in solemn vows; and there are five simple vows, the dispensation of which is especially reserved to him. They are: 1. A vow of perpetual chastity; 2. A vow of entering religion; 3. A vow of making a journey to Jerusalem, to visit the sepulchre of our Lord; 4. A vow of visiting the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome; 5. A vow of making a pilgrimage to the church of St. James of Compostella in Spain. These five vows are reserved only, when they are made through a love of virtue, and when they are not penal nor conditional vows.

19. The bishops can dispense in, or commute, in their own dioceses, all simple vows not reserved to the Pope. Even the five vows reserved to the Pope, they can dispense under certain circumstances; for example, if they have been made through great fear, and in order to avoid some evil unjustly threatened, or if they were conditional or penal. Priests have no power to dispense in vows, or to change them, unless specially authorized by a superior, who has power to do so.

20. The obligation of a vow may be sometimes taken away, without either dispensation or commutation. *First*, by a change of the matter; that is, when some circumstance occurs which, had it been foreseen, would have prevented the person from making the vow. *Secondly*, it is taken away by annulment. A vow may be annulled by a father, a husband, or any other person who has dominative power. And to take away the

obligation of a vow in this manner, a cause is not necessary. A father or a husband may, without cause, invalidate the vow of his child or of his wife, and then the obligation of the vow ceases.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

WICKED BOYS TORN BY BEARS, ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR DISRESPECT TO A HOLY MAN.

When Eliseus was on his way to Bethel, one of the seats of Jeroboam's calf worship, he met with some boys of the town, who, perceiving him to be bald, began to insult and impudently miscall him, saying: Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. Eliseus looked back and called down the curse of God upon them. He had scarce spoken the words, when, behold! two bears came out of the neighbouring forest, and destroyed two-and-forty of the wicked boys. (4 Kings, ii.)

THE SCOFFER IN THE CONFESSIONAL.

A party of young men were assembled one evening in a hotel, in one of the towns of France. They drank freely of the wine before them, and after discussing various matters, the conversation turned on religion. The young men were Catholics in name, and had been brought up in the religion of their fathers; but the reading of irreligious books destroyed the fruits of their early training. They commenced speaking of religion and its practices in tones of ridicule and impiety. The confessional was the principal subject of their wit and merriment. "It would be a glorious thing," remarked one, "if we were to go through a mock form of confessing." His companions said that it would be a capital joke, but defied him to carry it through. "I promise to do it," replied he; "what would be easier? I'll bet you as many bottles as we have already taken, that I will do it, and that at our next meeting I will relate to you everything that occurred in the confessional." And so it was agreed. The next day, Saturday, some of the party early sought out their bold associate to remind him of his promise. "The promise," said he, "I will fulfil." And, accordingly, he repaired in the evening to a church, and sat himself down at one of the confessionals, where

he waited with much impatience till his turn came. He then entered, knelt down, and addressed the priest in these words: "Sir, I beg you to understand that I have not come here for the purpose of really making my confession, but in order to win a bet that I have made. I confess, then, that I have committed such and such sins, but I don't trouble my head the least about the matter; I have been guilty of this and that crime, but I don't care in the least about the matter." And in this manner he went on to tell other sins, always adding, scornfully, that the matter gave him no concern. When he had finished, the confessor calmly said: "You have done your part —won your bet—you have confessed your sins; it is for me now to do my duty, to impose on you an appropriate penance. For three successive days, then, you will repeat three times, morning, noon, and night, these words: 'I shall die, but I don't care about it. There is a judgment to come, but I don't care about it. There is a hell for sinners, but I don't care about it.'" And so saying, he dismissed him. In the evening the young man returned to his companions, related to them how he had gone to confession, and demanded the immediate payment of his bet. But his companions, however, insisted that he should first perform the penance he received, as it was an integral part of confession. "If that be all," replied he, somewhat unwillingly, "so let it be; I give you my word of honour that I will go through with the whole business. The bet is fairly won." And, in fact, he began to repeat the words prescribed him, hastily and thoughtlessly at first, but by degrees with unusual emotion. They seemed to call up from the grave the extinct belief of his childhood; they made him restless and dejected; at last his lips ceased to pronounce the awful syllables; he reflected seriously upon death, eternity, and the state of his soul. In a few days grace had accomplished its work. He returned to the same confessor, disclosed to him the state of his soul, and begged his assistance to make a sincere and true confession, in order to obtain forgiveness of God. He made the confession, and during the remainder of his life was most diligent in the performance of every religious exercise.

THE VOW OF LOUIS IX., KING OF FRANCE.

Louis IX., King of France, at an early period of his life, became so seriously ill that very little hope was entertained of his recovery. When he became somewhat better, he ordered a crucifix to be brought to him. Taking hold of it, he laid it on his breast, to show that when he should have recovered his health, he would undertake a crusade for the deliverance of the Holy Land from the hands of infidels. When the time for leaving had arrived, Queen Blanche, his

mother, and the nobles of the kingdom, endeavoured to induce him to change his resolution. They represented to him that the vow was made when his body was enfeebled and his mind weakened from sickness, and that, let the engagement be what it may, he could easily obtain a dispensation, as the wants of his kingdom and the weakness of his health demanded that he should remain at home. As they were urging their reasons to show that the vow was not, under the circumstances, obligatory, he pretended to agree in their view of the matter, and took the cross from his habit, and sent it back to the Bishop of Paris. Queen Blanche and the courtiers testified no little joy at, as they thought, the change of his resolution. But the king, fixing his eyes on each one of those around him, said in a decided tone: "You do not deem me now under the influence of a disturbed mind. You see I am neither sick in body nor mind; that I am in the possession of all my faculties. Well, I demand again the cross, and I take God to witness that I shall not eat or drink until it be returned to me." At these words the minds of all around him were changed, and they cried out that it was the will of God that he should depart, and that no one should oppose his resolution.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Are we strictly prohibited from taking the name of God in vain?
2. Should we speak respectfully of God and His saints?
3. In what way should we speak of the ministers of God?
4. How should we speak of religion and its practices?
5. Should everything connected with our religion be dear to us?
6. Why is it that an oath is deemed necessary to know the truth?
7. How many kinds of oaths are there?
8. Is swearing by any of God's creatures an oath?
9. What do you mean by a vow?
10. What are the necessary conditions of a vow?
11. Is it pleasing to God and profitable to ourselves to make vows?
12. Have persons remarkable for sanctity made vows?
13. Enumerate the different sort of vows that there are?
14. What do you mean by absolute and conditional vows?
15. What are solemn vows, and what are simple vows?
16. How do you prove that we are obliged to fulfil our vows?
17. What do you mean by a dispensation, or changing of a vow?
18. Who can dispense or change a vow?
19. Can bishops and priests dispense in vows?
20. How can the obligation of a vow be taken away?

PRACTICE.

1. Never speak lightly, or in a tone of ridicule, of your holy religion, or of its sacred ministers.
2. If the practices and ceremonies of the Church be spoken of in a sneering manner in your presence, check at once the scoffer.
3. If, at any time, you have made a vow to God, let nothing induce you to violate it.

PRAYER.

O God of power and sanctity! pardon us if we have, at any time, spoken of Thee and of our holy religion with irreverence and levity. We acknowledge, O Lord! that we have but too often shown a want of respect for Thy holy ministers. We now have been taught how displeasing it is to Thee to treat our religion and its ministers with disrespect, but, in future, we shall make amends for our past misconduct, and manifest, by every word and action of ours, the deep reverence and filial affection that we entertain for the ministers of the altar. Amen.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON CURSING AND SWEARING

Q. What is forbidden by the second Commandment?

A. All false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths; also, cursing, swearing, blaspheming, and profane words. (Matt. v. 34; James, v. 12.)

1. The second Commandment forbids "all false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths;" for, to make an oath lawful there are three things required to accompany the oath; namely, *truth, justice,* and *judgment.* If these

conditions be wanting, the oath is not lawful, but is "false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary," dishonourable to God, and consequently forbidden by His holy law: "Thou shalt swear, as the Lord liveth, in truth, and in judgment, and in justice." (Jer. iv. 2.)

2. First, then, for an oath to be lawful, it must be attended with *truth;* that is, the thing we swear to must be true and not false; and he that swears to it must not only think and believe it true, but he must know it for certain to be true. So, also, when one promises anything upon oath, it must really be in his power to perform it, and he must really intend to make good his promise, when the time comes for performing it. Secondly, that an oath should be lawful, it must be accompanied with *justice;* that is, that the thing we swear to do be just and good, and not *unjust.* Thirdly, to make an oath lawful, it must be attended with *judgment;* that is, it must not be "rash" and inconsiderate, nor taken for every trifling cause. Before we swear, we should well weigh the thing we are about to swear to, and all its circumstances, in order to know whether the matter be of that importance as to require an oath. Whenever we swear by God with these three conditions —*truth*, *justice*, and *judgment*—we honour Him, and perform a virtuous act; but when either of these conditions is wanting, we are guilty of an act detested by God. If *truth* be wanting, we are guilty of a "false" oath; if *justice* be wanting, we are guilty of an "unjust" oath; and if *judgment* be wanting, we become guilty of a "rash and unnecessary" oath, and so violate "the second Commandment."

3. "Also cursing and swearing" are forbidden by the second Commandment. What is cursing? It is calling down, or wishing any evil or harm to ourselves, or to our neighbours, or to any of God's creatures; such as, that bad luck may attend them; that they may never get over the sickness of the year; that the devil may

take them, or confound them; or that God may damn or blast them, or the like. We are guilty of cursing, whether the evil be only wished in the heart, or be also expressed in words. Now, there are different degrees of malice in this sin of cursing; for the greater the evil we wish ourselves or our neighbour, the greater is the sin we commit. When you curse yourself or your neighbour, you wish some evil to yourself or to him. If you wish the devil had your neighbour, or that he may be damned, and wished it from your heart, you therefore wish him murdered, both body and soul—the greatest evil that could befall him—and consequently you are guilty of a mortal sin. If, on the other hand, the evil you wish your neighbour be only slight, and productive of no serious consequences, you become guilty of only a venial sin. Of this horrible vice of cursing we shall speak at greater length in a subsequent question.

4. "Swearing," that is, rash swearing—as, for example, when a person, without any necessity, and without deliberation and proper attention, swears rashly by the name of God, or by that of Jesus Christ, or of the Holy Ghost, or by any of God's creatures—is, too, forbidden by the "second Commandment." That sort of rash swearing has very often a curse added to it, as, for example—*May I never see God—may I fall down dead—that I may never stir out of this, if what I say be not true.* Or, *that I may never have luck—that God may blast me if I do not perform what I promise.*

5. "Blaspheming and profane words"—that is, to speak injuriously of God, by denying any of His perfections, such as, that He is not just or good, or merciful—are a great violation of "the second Commandment." So, also, it is opposed to the "second Commandment" to speak in an injurious manner of the Blessed Virgin, or of any of God's saints, or of the holy Scriptures, or of the sacraments. Of "swearing and blaspheming" we shall speak more at large in the following chapter.

Q. Is cursing a grievous sin?

A. It is a very grievous sin, for it is opposed to the law of God and the spirit of Jesus Christ, and is severely condemned as a horrible, diabolical, and impious practice.

6. "Cursing" is, indeed, a grievous transgression of the second Commandment, which forbids taking the name of God in vain. And if, as God Himself says, we shall not be guiltless or go unpunished, who take His name in vain, how much more guilty will he be who makes use of the holy name of God to call down any evil upon himself or others! The Scripture speaks of "cursing" with horror. In the book of Psalms we read: "Their throat is an open sepulchre; . . the poison of asps is under their lips." And why all this? Because "their mouth is full of *cursing* and bitterness . . . . destruction and unhappiness is in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes." (Ps. xiii. 3.) In the latter part of the same book we are told that a curse is the portion and inheritance of them that love cursing: "He loved cursing, and it shall come upon him; he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him; he put on cursing like a garment, and it went in like water into his entrails, and like oil to his bones. May it be unto him like a garment which covereth him, and like a girdle with which he is continually girded." (Ps. cviii. 18.)

7. But why, dear children, is cursing spoken of in such severe terms in holy Scriptures? For many reasons. First, because it is directly opposed to that charity and love of our neighbour which Christ so strictly requires of all His followers, and which obliges us to wish well to our neighbour as we do to ourselves: "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Now, to love one's neighbour is to wish him well; but to curse him is to hate him, and wish him ill; for a greater act of hatred cannot be used against him than to pray that *God may damn him*, or that *the devil may take him*.

8. Secondly, "cursing" is opposed to all that Jesus Christ had in view when He suffered and died on a cross for the salvation of mankind. Jesus Christ died for the salvation of our souls; but the *curser* prays that these souls may be damned. Jesus Christ shed His blood to redeem souls from hell, and to rescue them from the devil; the curser wishes *that they may go to hell*, and prays that *the devil may take them*. Christ laid down His life that souls may enter heaven, and enjoy the glory of His Father; the curser prays that *they may never go to heaven* nor *see the face of God*. The curser declares himself to be an enemy, an adversary, an opposer of Jesus Christ, a servant of the devil, a promoter of his designs, and, as far as in him lies, a murderer of of souls. By cursing he wishes evil to those who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ—he wishes evil to those whom God has loved, and loved to that degree, as even to give His only Son for them. Think, then, how offensive it must be to Him to hear the curser wish evil to those for whose salvation He has spared nothing, not even the sacred life of His only Son!

9. "Cursing," in the third place, is severely condemned, because it is a sin which is commonly attended with great scandal to little ones; for young children, hearing this diabolical language spoken by their parents and servants, soon learn to speak in the same strain, and from their example begin, too early, indeed, to offend God by so doing. "But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me," says our Lord, "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. xviii. 6.)

Q. What do you think of those who curse any of God's creatures, such as their horses and cattle?

A. Those who curse any of God's creatures which are in one's hands, or the instrument with which one is working with, is guilty of great ingratitude to Him.

10. All God's creatures, such as horses and cattle, and instruments of work, are His benefits, given for the use and service of man, and proceeding from His infinite goodness. When, therefore, we curse our horses and cattle, or those of our neighbour, we curse the blessings bestowed upon us by Almighty God. What ingratitude must it then be to Him, when, instead of thanking Him for those favours, we curse them, and pray that the devil may take them, or blast them, or confound them, or the like! Is not this, base and unworthy conduct, not to speak of its wickedness? What would you say, what would be your misery, if God should hear your evil wishes? If your curses should be immediately heard—should your cattle rot upon the fields—should the plague take them—should the devil fetch them, as your prayer has it, what would become of you? Why, you would be ruined, and your family would be beggars. By cursing your cattle, do you not, then, tempt God to punish you? Is not this enough to stop His kind and liberal hand, to turn His heart from you, and to let fall on you, instead of blessings, the punishment of your curses.

11. And yet, alas! how frequent these curses are among you. You discharge them on almost every occasion. You seldom drive your horses, but upon the slightest accident a volley of curses falls upon your cattle, though your own negligence, perhaps, has been the cause of it. You seldom plough your field, but you sow it with curses as well as seed. And so, how can you expect a good crop? In the coming harvest, will not the curses grow up with the corn, and draw God's anger upon you instead of His blessing? It is, indeed, no wonder that your crops so often fail, that your cattle so often die, and that your affairs succeed so badly. It is not at all a matter of surprise to hear that a great part of your corn is blighted or mildewed, or laid prostrate by the wind. These effects are the scourges of God, and the fruits of your own evil wishes. You, by

cursing, have sown the wind, and you must be prepared to reap the whirlwind.

Q. Are curses ever heard so as to fall on those whom one curses?
A. Yes; there are four cases wherein the Scriptures tells us that curses are heard and fall on those against whom they are uttered.

12. In the first place, curses are heard when the poor curse the rich, who oppress and provoke them. The book of Ecclesiasticus is clear on this point, for therein we read: "Turn not away thy eyes from the poor, for fear of anger, and give not them that ask of thee room to curse thee behind thy back; for the prayer of him that curses thee in the bitterness of his soul *shall be heard.*" (Ecclus. iv. 5.) In the second place, curses are heard when widows and orphans curse their oppressors; for we are told in the same book of Scriptures, that "the Lord will not accept any person against a poor man, and He will hear the prayer of him that is wronged. . . . . Do not the widow's tears run down the cheek, and is not her cry against him that causeth them to fall? for from the cheek they go up even to heaven, and the Lord that heareth will not be delighteth with them." (Ecclus. xxxv. 18.)

13. In the third place, curses are heard when parents curse their own children; for the book of Ecclesiasticus tells us, that "the father's blessing establishes the houses of the children; but the mother's curse rooteth up the foundation." (Ecclus. iii. 11.) There is a very remarkable example of this in the history of Noe, in the book of Genesis. In that book we read that Noe, having partaken too freely of wine, became unintentionally intoxicated, and lay in an unseemly posture in his tent; and that when Cham saw and laughed at his father's nakedness, the father, on "awaking from the wine, when he had learned what his younger son had done to to him, he said: Cursed be Chanaan, a servant of servants

shall he be to his brethren." (Genesis, ix. 24.) In consequence of this curse, the posterity of Cham, by Chaanan, became a most wicked set of people, and were at last rooted out of the Holy Land by the Israelites; and those called the Gabonites, who were not extirpated, were made slaves—"hewers of wood and carriers of water." (Josh. ix. 23.) And the Scripture, speaking of the Chanaanites, calls them a wicked generation, "for it was a cursed seed from the beginning" (Wisd. xii. 10), alluding to the curse pronounced by Noe upon Cham, their father.

14. In the fourth place, curses are heard when people curse themselves. We find a striking example of this in the Israelites. When in the wilderness, and approaching the land of promise, they heard the accounts given by the spies, of that long-wished-for country, and of the great strength of its inhabitants, their courage began to fail, and their confidence in God to be shaken; and in their anger and vexation of mind they began to curse themselves, saying: "Would to God we may die in this vast wilderness, and that the Lord may not bring us into this land, lest we fall by the sword, and our wives and children be led away captives." (Num. xiv. 3.) God was incensed at their murmuring, and He appeared to Moses, and said: "How long will this people detract me? how long will they not believe me, for all the signs I have wrought before them? I will strike them, therefore, with pestilence, and consume them." (Num. xiv. 11.)

15. Moses interposed, and prayed fervently to God, that His anger might be averted. God heard the prayer of Moses, and forgave the Israelites the sin of their murmuring; but the curse they pronounced on themselves He would on no account pardon, but He swore that it would take its effect. "As I live, saith the Lord, according as you have spoken in my hearing, so will I do to you; on the wilderness shall your carcases

lie; . . . your children shall wander in the desert for forty years, until the carcases of their fathers be consumed in the desert." (Num. xiv. 28.) And accordingly their carcases lay in the wilderness, and their bones became whitened in the desert land. We have another very frightful example of the great evil of cursing oneself, in the Jews who crucified our Lord. When they insisted, with Pilate, to have the Saviour crucified, they prayed this dreadful curse upon themselves and their children: "His blood be upon us and on our children." And this curse was heard, for they were, from that day, rejected from being the people of God, and at once desolation, misery, and ruin, became their portion; and even to this very day their descendants are groaning under that heavy curse.

Q. What is to be said of those, who, when cursing others, have no ill-will towards them, and are very far from wishing, in their hearts, that their curses should fall upon them?

A. Such persons are certainly not guilty of hatred against their neighbours; but they cannot be excused, for many reasons, from transgressing the law of God by their curses.

16. Persons who curse others without at the same time wishing them any harm, cannot be charged with the malice of hatred, but yet they are guilty of profaning the name of God, or of praying externally to the devil, or of giving scandal to others, or of perverting the use of the tongue, and of making that member, which is given us to praise God, an instrument of paying honour to the devil. Our Saviour tells us that "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it on the day of judgment." (Matt. xxii. 36.) And if, dear children, we are to render an account of every idle word, what account must those give of their curses, who utter them on the least provocation, when they shall appear in such numbers on the last day. The curses they utter are not blown away by the wind. Though they themselves think no more of them, they are not forgotten by God, but are laid up in store for

the great day of judgment, and if not blotted out by a sincere repentance and amendment, will one day be brought forward against them to their unutterable confusion. Oh, the unhappy fate of cursers!

17. But can those who have a custom of swearing on the slightest provocation, say with truth that they are always free from wishing in their hearts what their words express? Many, to be sure, will say that they curse only in a passion—that they never meant what they said—that they were sorry for it when their passion was over. That may be, indeed; but how can they answer how far their heart goes along with their words, whilst anger and indignation take possession of their reason? When their mouth speaks in the bitterness of their soul, is not there reason to think that their words carry the heart with them? Our blessed Lord tells us that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." But when is the abundance of the heart greater than on such occasions? The Israelites in their anger and vexation cursed themselves that they may die in the wilderness; but no sooner was their passion over, than they became sorry for what they had done, and at once offered to go into the Holy Land, and fight against its inhabitants. Yet, this did not prevent God from hearing their curse, and declaring with an oath: "In the wilderness shall your carcases lie." And is not there every reason to suppose that when Christians curse in their passion, their hearts go along with their words, as well as the hearts of the Israelites went with the words they uttered?

Q. What do you think of those who have a custom of cursing?
A. Those who habitually curse have a most shocking and irreligious custom.

18. Those who have got an unhappy custom of cursing, are anti-christian in their conduct. For is it not degrading to a Christian to be continually praying to

the devil for the ruin of his own or his neighbour's soul, and to be so backward and negligent in praying to Almighty God for his own or his neighbour's salvation? And is not this the case with all those who have contracted a habit of cursing? They can scarcely speak a sentence without calling down a curse upon themselves or some of God's creatures. They employ themselves continually in speaking the language of the damned here; and on that account there is every reason to fear, dear children, that it shall be their lot to do so hereafter, for an eternity. The unhappy language cursers speak, is a sign of the country to which they belong. All reasonable beings are divided into three classes. In the first class are the angels and saints, whose country is heaven, whose language is to praise and glorify God continually, to bless His holy name, and to pray for their brethren upon the earth. In the second place are the devils and damned souls, whose country is hell, whose language is to blaspheme the God of heaven, to curse themselves for their folly in having brought themselves to that place of misery by their sins, to curse the day that they were born, to curse their parents, those who first taught them to sin, and the partners of their crimes. In the third class are all of us who are still upon earth, and travelling towards one or the other of these two countries. If now we wish to know to which of these countries we belong, let us consider what is the language we speak. If a stranger be travelling through any country, and can speak only his own language, it is at once seen to what country he belongs. When St. Peter was charged as being one of our Lord's followers, and when he denied that he was, he was at once answered: "Surely thou art also one of them, for even thy speech doth discover thee" (Matt. xxvi. 73)—that is, discovered him to be a Galilean.

19. The wickedness of this sin of cursing has this peculiarity, that it proceeds from pure malice. It wants

the usual motives of sin—profit and pleasure. Some are induced to commit sin, but it is because they hope some considerable gain, or profit, or pleasure from it. But what is there to be got by cursing? What satisfaction and pleasure can arise from it? None—no inducement from profit, pleasure, or honour, as is commonly found in other sins. Cursers make themselves mere slaves of the devil, to please him and promote his service; for it is pleasing to Satan to hear the holy name of God so often profaned, and to hear Christians so often praying to himself for some evil to be let fall on themselves or others. In cursing there is not so much even as the vain pleasure of revenge; for your curses fall not upon your enemies, but upon your own heads, and draw down the anger of God, not upon your neighbour, but on yourself. Certainly, it is a strange sort of revenge, that because another has done you an injury, you must do yourself a greater one; because another has injured you, you must ruin your own soul. And yet this is what you exactly do, when upon any provocation you curse one another.

20. Cursers, then, sin for the mere sake of sinning. Without deriving the least profit or pleasure to themselves, they boldly and maliciously abuse their Lord and God—the Lord of heaven and earth. Yes, they outrage that God on whom their lives, death, and eternal happiness or misery depends—they outrage Him by whom they live and subsist, and from whom they have all that they possess, and everything that they hope for. What malice, what corruption of heart, to be wicked without the expectation of profit, pleasure, or honour! Those, therefore, who have a habit of cursing, lie under the guilt of a great and scandalous sin, and cannot expect to enter the kingdom of heaven, unless they labour in earnest to overcome that habit.

Q. If a curse proceed from our mouth before we are aware of it, and without reflection, are we guilty of sin?

A. If such a curse arise from a bad habit, which we take no pains to overcome, we are guilty of sin.

21. When curses are the effect of an evil custom, which we do not labour to overcome, we cannot be excused before God; for though these curses which break out of a sudden are not voluntary in themselves, yet they are voluntary in their cause, as we do not labour to remove the evil habit that we have contracted. He that wills the cause wills the effect that follows, and, therefore, he must render a strict account of those effects. An evil custom itself is criminal, and every one is bound, in duty, to conquer and destroy it. If a curse, which breaks out before we think of it, be the effect of a vicious habit which we truly desire to break, and use all our endeavours to overcome, we are excused from guilt, when on any particular occasion the force of custom may betray us into it, for such cursing is neither voluntary in itself nor in its cause. But as long as we entertain the custom, and take no pains to overcome it, this shows that we consent to it, that we approve of it, and, consequently, we shall be answerable for all the consequences of it, and the effects produced by it.

22. Neither let cursers delude themselves by saying they have no great custom of cursing, and seldom fall into it above twice or three times a week. Three times a week! Three times a week is one hundred and fifty-six times in the year! And if oftener in the week, what will the number be in a year? what in ten years? what the amount in one's whole life? Measure, then, if you can, the number and grievousness of your curses, you who have been many years the victims of this evil habit. What a heavy load must lie on your consciences! See, then, in time, how far this detestable vice of cursing has gained on you; then raise in your hearts a horror of it. Change your language now whilst you have time, lest you may be condemned to utter similar language for an eternity in hell. Ah! if we consider

the enormity of this sin, how is it, dear children, that we can let ourselves run into so vile a habit? Ought we not sooner cut out our tongues than allow them to be employed in abusing our God and the creatures made to His image and likeness? Oh! how is it possible that those tongues that were given us to bless and praise the holy name of God, and to return Him daily thanks for His benefits, should ever be used to profane that holy name, and to curse and vilify those very benefits! Think, again, children, that cursing is not the language of the blessed, and that it will never fit you for heaven; but it is the language of hell, and qualifies you for the company of the damned.

23. Cursing, swearing, and blaspheming, is the only employment of the devils and the damned souls—it is their proper sin. They are doomed to a fixed state of misery, unchangeable torments; so, out of pure malice, they are continually cursing and blaspheming the name of God. Yes; this always has been, now is, and ever will be, their continual language and constant employment, whilst the blessed in heaven enjoy calm and settled happiness, and bless and praise His holy name for ever. O hell, how detestable art thou through the innumerable cursers and blasphemers who fill thy fiery cauldrons! Hell! hell! how terrible soever thou art, thou wouldst appear with much less horror, did thy inhabitants praise and bless the name of God! But, alas! over and above all their torments, they never cease to curse and blaspheme—to curse themselves and others, and blaspheme the holy name of God. Oh! let you not now join with them—let you not now follow their ways—do not you now enter the noviceship of hell.

24. If you now curse, yours and theirs is the same language—yours and theirs is the same employment; and whatever you may say or think, you surely belong to that dark and dismal region, for your very speech

betrays you. In some manner you seem even worse than they; for they curse in the midst of their torments, and blaspheme under the weight of endless misery and calamity. But you curse under the blessings of heaven—under the favours of a kind, good, and merciful God. Nay, more, you curse the very blessings of God, and abuse His name, whilst He is pouring favours upon you, and patiently awaiting your amendment. For the future, then, be watchful over yourselves, and let not this filthy vice grow up with your growth. Let not the language of the devils and the damned be your discourse, lest it may be your miserable fate to speak it for ever. Use your tongues for the end they were given you—to praise God, and thank Him for His benefits, and to defend and comfort your neighbour. Doing this, you will please God, and assist your neighbour, and your reward hereafter will be the enjoyment of that God in the kingdom of His glory.

Q. What is to be thought of fathers and mothers who curse their children?

A. Fathers and mothers who deliberately curse their children, are guilty of a great offence against God.

25. The curses which fathers and mothers call down on their children, are of a more serious nature than the curses of others, on account of the scandal with which they are attended. The curse of parents are, too, altogether opposed to that love and affection which they should naturally have for their children that they have brought forth and reared. Parents are, undoubtedly, obliged to reprehend and correct their children; but the correction must be given coolly and not in a foaming passion, and in maledictory words. Children, on their side, should be very careful never to give cause to their parents to curse them; for, although parents, in pronouncing these curses, are guilty of

sin, their imprecations are often heard by God, and allowed by Him to produce their intended effect. We have many examples of parents' curses being heard by God. St. Augustin, in his work *of the City of God*, speaks of children who, when cursed by their mother, were seized at once with such a trembling, that they were an object of terror to all that saw them, and soon after became vagabonds through the whole earth.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

A MOTHER'S CURSE.

St. Augustin tells us, that at Cæsarea, a town in Cappadocia, there were ten children—seven boys and three girls—of an honourable family, who all, upon their mother's curse, were visibly punished by Almighty God. The occasion was this: the eldest of the children abused his mother, not only by injurious words, but also by striking her, and the rest of the children stood by unconcerned at the insult and injury, and said not one word to their brother in her behalf. The woman, impatient of the injury, and overwhelmed with grief, ran to the church to curse her eldest son. The devil, laying hold of her violent passion, persuaded her to curse them all, to which she then easily consented. So, taking hold of the font, with her hair all flying loose, and her breasts bare, she prayed to God that all her children might become vagabonds, be banished from their home, and wandering about strange countries, become a terror to mankind. In consequence of this curse, the eldest, being the chief in wickedness, was immediately seized with a such a trembling in every part, that he alarmed all that looked upon him. The same punishment seized all the rest within the space of one year, one after another, in the order as they were in age. The mother, seeing that her wicked prayer had so sad and fatal an effect, was not able to support the remorse of her conscience and the reproach of her neighbours, so she went and hanged herself, finishing a miserable life with a far more wretched end. The children were so filled with shame and confusion at their mother's sad fate, that they could not bear the sight of their friends and neighbours, but left their country, and turning vagabonds, wandered over the greatest part of the Roman Empire. After some time the eldest was cured at Ravenna, a town on the coast of the

Adriatic Sea, through the intercession of St. Laurence. The sixth, called Paul, with his sister, Palladia, came to Hippo fifteen days before Easter, being admonished to do so by Augustin; and there, at the tomb of St. Peter, they begged of Almighty God, with many prayers and tears, that He would be pleased, through the intercession of the saints, to free them from their trembing; and Paul was cured, though his sister was not. St. Augustin, in his sermon on this subject, makes the following remarks. "It is to be hoped," says he, "that the other brothers and sisters (who were all, upon their mother's curse, struck by the hand of God for abusing her) may regain their health and cure, as this young man has done, for whose recovery we now rejoice. Nevertheless, let children learn henceforward to be obedient and respectful to their parents, and let parents tremble to be thus angry. The mother prayed against her children and she was heard, because God is truly just. But what became of her, miserable wretch? Ah! the sooner she was heard, the more severely she was punished."—*De Civitate Dei.*

A CHILD ADDICTED TO SWEARING.

St. Gregory tells us that "a child accustomed to swear, in his impatience, by the name of God, was seized with a mortal distemper, and assaulted by evil spirits, which caused him to depart this life in his father's arms. The father being too indulgent to him, neglected correcting and reprehending him for this vice, and so," as the same saint observes, "had bred up in this child a great sinner for hell."—*L.*, 4; *Dialog. c.* 18.

THE THREE CURSES.

Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, relates the following passage of three cursers and swearers:—"The first of them wished he might be burnt if what he said, upon oath, was not true; the second prayed that he might be seizedwith a fit of sickness; and the third that he might be struck blind if what he asserted was false. In a short time they all obtained their respective requests. The first was burned alive, with his whole family; the second was overwhelmed with malignant disorders from head to foot; the third, seeing the visible judgments that fell on his companions, and dreading the immediate wrath of heaven, began to repent, and wept so bitterly for his past impiety, that he lost the sight of both his eyes, by the abundance of his tears."—*Book* 6, *c.* 9.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is required to make an oath lawful?
2. Why should an oath be attended with truth, justice, and judgment?
3. What do you understand by cursing?
4. What do you mean by swearing?
5. Explain what you understand by blasphemy?
6. Can you prove from Scripture that cursing is a great sin?
7. Why is cursing so much reprobated in Scripture?
8. In what way is cursing opposed to the views of Jesus Christ?
9. Is there any other reason for condemning cursing?
10. How are we ungrateful to God when we curse our cattle?
11. What are the evil consequences of cursing God's creatures?
12. Mention the first and second cases in which curses are heard by God?
13. Are the curses of parents on children heard by God?
14. Are the curses of those who curse themselves heard?
15. Did Moses, by his prayer, save the Israelites from the consequences of their curses?
16. Why are we guilty of sin when we curse without intending evil?
17. When we curse in anger, is it not to be feared that we wish evil?
18. Is the country to which we belong known by our language?
19. Do cursers gain anything by the language which they speak?
20. Why do cursers then so much outrage God?
21. If a curse breaks out suddenly and without reflection, are you guilty of sin?
22. What do you think of those whose say they curse only twice or three times a week?
23. Is cursing and swearing the language of hell?
24. Is the language of curses the language of the damned?
25. How should parents and children act in regard to cursing?

PRACTICE.

1 Fly the causes of cursing, such as anger, gaming, wicked company, because they are the occasions of that vile sin?

2. Whenever you are so unfortunate as to curse, impose upon yourself some penance at once, such as saying an act of contrition or kissing the ground.

3. Carefully avoid any expression which, though not in itself a curse, still tends to cursing.

PRAYER.

O Sovereign Majesty of heaven! inspire us all, on this day, with an abhorrence and hatred of this scandalous vice of cursing and swearing, and grant that we may always respect and reverence Thy adorable name. Alas! even though young we be, how often have our tongues pronounced frightful oaths and curses! But, Lord, it shall be so no longer. Give us, then, grace to employ our tongues here on earth as we hope to employ them hereafter in heaven; that is, in praising and blessing Thy holy name.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON PERJURY AND BLASPHEMY.

Q. Is it ever lawful to swear?

A. It is; when God's honour, our own, or our neighbour's good, or necessary defence, require it.

1. It is certainly most lawful to take a just oath, when there is sufficient cause for doing so; for we honour God's name when we swear by it to confirm the truth, as often as "God's honour, our own, or our neighbour's good, or necessary defence require it." A just and a lawful oath is an act of worship paid to God; for by taking an oath, we testify the great reverence we have for the majesty of God, as the infallible Truth who can never be deceived, and the just Avenger of all falsehood and lies. So in the book of Deuteronomy we read: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve Him only, and thou shalt swear by His name." (Deut. vi. 3.) And in the book of Psalms we are told that those who swear by the name of God shall

be extolled: "All they shall be praised that swear by Him." (Ps. lii. 12.)

2. Hence we find that God's chosen servants often swore; and nothing is more common in the prophets than these expressions: "As the Lord liveth, so may the Lord do to me, and may He add more." St. Paul, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, when assigning to them his motives for not paying them a visit, says: "I call God to witness upon my soul, that to spare you I come not as yet to Corinth." (2 Cor. i. 23.) There are many who, when called on to take an oath in defence of their neighbour's life or fortune, are very much troubled and apprehensive lest they should offend God; and it is with some difficulty they are brought to confirm by oath what they know or have seen. And yet, they will make no account of swearing where there is no necessity, and when their oaths dishonour God, scandalize their hearers, and bring damnation upon their own souls. Whenever, then, "God's honour, our own, or our neighbour's good, or necessary defence require it," we can *lawfully* and laudably swear.

Q. What do you mean by an unjust oath?

A. An oath injurious to God, to ourselves, or to our neighbours.

3. "An unjust oath" is when a person swears to do any evil thing, or anything against the law of God. And as everything against the law of God is an offence to God, you will at once see, dear children, that it is very "injurious to God" to swear, or call on Him to witness that you shall do what will offend Him. For if a simple promise of doing anything evil be "injurious to God," how much more so must be that promise when it is accompanied with an oath? Of this sort of oath the Jews were guilty when they "bound themselves with a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul." (Acts, xxiii. 12.)

4. As an "unjust oath" is when one swears to do anything unlawful, then, of course, anything sworn to, which may be "injurious to ourselves or to our neighbours," is an "unjust oath." To swear that one will kill himself, or burn his house, or shoot his horse, or destroy his property, is an "unjust oath," because such an oath is an offence to God, and injurious to oneself. To swear to kill one's children or neighbour, to break their necks, or to do them any other injury, is an "unjust oath," because such an oath is offensive to God, and "injurious to our neighbours."

5. And it is, indeed, surprising how frequent these kind of oaths are among people, when one gets into a sudden passion or anger against anything. We but too often hear them pronounced by fathers and mothers against themselves and their children, when vexed by them, by masters against their servants, and by servants on cattle. They swear by God they will beat them, by Christ they will kill them, or by the cross of Christ they will turn them out of house, and never more give them anything to eat. Those, too, are guilty of an "unjust oath" who swear to do what is a hindrance of a greater good—as, for example, that they will not be reconciled to their enemies, or that they will not fast and pray till such a time; that they will not give alms, or assist and relieve their friends in necessity; that they will never speak to this or that person, or that they will never do him a kind act.

Q. Is a person obliged to keep an unjust oath?

A. No; he sinned in taking it, and would also sin in keeping it.

6. If one has been so wicked as at any time to take "an unjust oath," he is by no means obliged to keep it, because the obligation which an oath imposes on us to perform what we promise arises from this, that having

called upon God to witness that we will do what we promise, He, out of respect to His holy name, obliges us to perform it, and will punish us if we do not. But surely Almighty God will not oblige us to perform what is unjust and sinful. He will not punish us for not doing what is unlawful. It is impious to think that He would. God can never require, out of reverence to His holy name, that we should do that which is an offence against Him, and which is strictly forbidden by Him. In taking an unjust oath we sinned, and "in keeping it," or doing what we swore to, we "would also sin," for that which is essentially bad, such as the fulfilment of an unjust oath, can never, under any circumstances, be allowed. Nay, the very pretending to do an unjust thing, because we had sworn to do it, would be a double sin, because it would be making the holy name of God a bond of iniquity, besides the evil itself committed.

7. Were the forty Jews and more, who swore to kill St. Paul, obliged to keep their oaths? No; for had they kept it—that is, killed St. Paul—they would have added to their sin, in taking an *unjust oath*, another grievous crime—that of murder. We read in St. Matthew that Herod was so pleased with the dancing of his daughter, Herodias, that he swore that he would grant her anything she asked. She asked for the head of St. John the Baptist, and immediately Herod ordered that his head should be brought to his daughter. But was Herod obliged to kill St. John the Baptist because he had sworn to grant his daughter's request, no matter what that should be? So far from it, that he is condemned by all Christians as a murderer for putting the Baptist to death. It is, therefore, plain that we are not bound to *keep an unjust oath*, or to perform what we have unjustly sworn to do. It is a great sin to *take* such an oath, but but it still would be a greater sin to *keep it*. All that remains, then, for one who has *taken* an *unjust oath*, is to

repent of his crime, and have a horror of doing what he swore to do.

Q. Is a person obliged to keep a lawful oath?
A. Yes; and it would be perjury to break it.

8. We are strictly bound to keep "a lawful oath," or to perform what we have sworn to do, provided the thing sworn to be good and lawful. For if we are obliged to make good our simple promises, how much more obliged are we "to keep a lawful oath," or to make good what we have sworn to do. When we swear, as we have already seen, we call on God to witness that we will perform what we promise; we are, therefore, strictly obliged to make good that promise; for if we do not *keep that oath*, or make good that promise sworn to, we endeavour, as much as lies in our power, to make God palliate our knavery; we endeavour to engage Him to patronize our lies, to support our falsehood, and to make Him witness an untruth. And what can be more injurious to God than to endeavour to make Him bear testimony to a lie? *Breaking* a lawful oath is, then, dear children, a great insult to God, and a great disrespect of His holy name; it is a crying sin before heaven; and this vile sin is called "perjury."

Q. What is perjury?
A. To break a lawful oath, or take a false one.

9. In the first place, "perjury" is "to break a lawful oath," or not to perform what we have sworn to do, when it is lawful and possible to perform it; because what we promise upon oath, we must take care to perform, otherwise it will be a lying promise, confirmed by an oath, and therefore perjury. In the second place, "perjury" is the *taking* of a *false oath*. A *false oath* is taken when one swears that to be true which he knows or believes to be false, because he swears to a lie. Again, a person *takes a false oath* or *perjures* himself, when he

swears to that which is in reality true, but when swearing does not think it true, but rather thinks it false. He perjures himself, I say, because he swears to what he *thinks* is a lie. One, too, *perjures* himself, or *takes a false oath*, by swearing a thing to be *true* about which he is doubtful, because such a person exposes himself to the *danger* of swearing to a lie. Those also are guilty of "perjury," or a *false oath*, who promise, upon oath, to perform something, and at the same time do not intend to make good their promise, because they who call God to witness that they will do such a thing, and at the same time have no intention of doing it, lie in their own hearts, and swear to a lie. "Perjury" is, then, "to break a lawful oath, or to take a false one."

Q. Is perjury a great sin?
A. It is a most grievous sin.

10. We can have, dear children, little doubt that "perjury is a most grievous sin," and of its own nature a most detestable crime; for he who is guilty of "perjury," as we have already seen, openly insults God, formally contemns Him, and is guilty of the greatest irreverence against His sacred name. He who commits "perjury" calls on God to witness a falsehood! And can we suppose anything more horrible and impious than that of making use of the name and the authority of the God of truth to confirm a lie? When we call on God to witness a lie, we must suppose that either He does not know the truth, or that He can be corrupted to serve as a false witness, and give testimony to a lie, or that He does not mind whether His holy name be abused to attest lies or not. And is not this braving, as it were, the omnipotence of God? Is it not insulting and mocking His holy name? "Thou shalt not swear falsely by My name, nor profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord." (Lev. xix. 12.)

11. "Perjury" is then "a most grievous sin," because it is highly injurious to the infinite truth and holiness of God. And it is "a most grievous sin" on another account, as being most injurious to our neighbour and to human society. By "perjury" our neighbour is greatly deceived by that very thing which is considered to give the greatest security of truth. "Perjury," too, destroys all society, puts an end to human arrangements; for society could never exist, nor could business be transacted, unless we had a certainty of the truth by oaths or solemn affirmations. "Perjury" is also a great injury to one's own soul; for by a *false oath*, one gives his own consent to, and prays for his own condemnation. In "perjury" there is, what is called, no parvity of matter. No matter how unimportant the matter about which we swear be, if we *swear falsely* we are guilty of a mortal sin; because calling on God to witness a lie of any description, is offering a great insult to Him. It is no wonder, then, that perjury should be so severely prohibited by the word of God. "Behold, you put your trust in lying words," says the prophet Jeremiah, "which shall not profit you; to steal, to murder, to commit adultery, to *swear falsely*. . . . And now, because you have done all these works, saith the Lord . . . I will cast you away before my face." (Jer. vii. 8, 13, 15.) It may be necessary to remark, that he who swears falsely before a judge in a court of justice, is guilty of a *reserved* sin. It is called a *reserved* sin, because a penitent cannot be absolved from it by an ordinary confessor, without permission being given by the bishop of the diocese.

12. A witness is always bound to give true answers when he is lawfully interrogated by a judge. But some ignorant persons will say: "If I told the truth my neighbour would be severely punished; and through charity for him, I have said that I knew nothing about the matter." Oh, charity! Will you, in order to be charitable to your neighbour, commit a most grievous

sin, and condemn yourself to hell? And the consequences of your denial of the truth are, that evil-doers are acquitted, and thefts, murders, and many other evils increase. Ah! dear children, if, at any time, you are obliged to take an oath, think seriously on the matter, and resolve, no matter what the consequences may be, to tell the truth, and not to stain your soul by "perjury," that *most grievous sin*.

Q. Besides perjury, is there any other criminal sort of oath?
A. Yes; blasphemy is a most criminal sort of oath.

13. The word *blasphemy*, derived from two Greek words, $\beta\lambda\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omega$ and $\phi\acute{\eta}\mu\eta$, which signifies wounding a reputation, is a word or oath injurious to God or His saints, by which we have the impiety to impute some fault to God, or deny some of His perfections; for example, it is "blasphemy" to say that God is not truthful, that He is not just, or that He is cruel. To incur the guilt of "blasphemy," it is not necessary that we should speak directly against God; speaking in a contumelious manner of the saints, or of sacred things, or of other creatures considered as the works of God, is also "blasphemy," because an insult offered to God's saints, or anything sacred, is offered to God, as the honour we show them is ultimately referred to God.

14. We may incur the guilt of *blasphemy* against God in several different ways: 1. By denying any of God's perfections; as, for example, saying that God is not all-wise nor all-powerful—that He is not good, nor just, nor kind, nor merciful—that He takes no interest in us here below—that He attends not to what we do, nor takes the least concern in our affairs—that there is no Providence, or the like. When poor people are labouring under the infliction of wrong, and are in destitution and misery, they sometimes fall into this kind of blasphemy. 2. By attributing any fault or imperfection to God; as, for example, that He is an unjust God

—that He is a despotic God—that He takes pleasure in the miseries of His creatures—that He cannot aid us in our troubles. Of this kind of blasphemy the children of Israel were guilty when, tired with the manna sent them from heaven, they wanted flesh; for "they spoke ill of God; they said, can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" 3. By attributing to creatures any of the attributes of God; for example, by saying that the devil is omnipotent—that he knows everything to come, or that he knows as much as God Himself; or by saying that such a person is a God, a second Messiah, as beautiful and as amiable as God. Of this sort of blasphemy the Jews were guilty when they attributed the miracles of our Lord to the devil.

15. (4.) We are guilty of "blasphemy" by cursing God or wishing Him ill; as, for example, death to God! would that there was no God, no Redeemer! This is the blasphemy of the damned souls; for St. John tells us, that "they bit their tongues for pain: and they blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pain and wounds." (Apoc. xvi. 10.) 5. By speaking contemptuously of God, or of His Son, Jesus Christ—by speaking in a tone of mockery and contempt of the holy name of Jesus, or of the wounds, blood, passion, or death of Christ, we are, too, guilty of "blaspheming." Of this kind of blasphemy those were guilty who derided Christ hanging on the cross: "They that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying, vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, save thyself; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matt. xxvii. 39.) Such was the blasphemy of Julian the Apostate, when, on the point of death, he cast some of his blood against heaven, crying out in his rage: "VICISTI GALILEAN." *Well! Galilean, you have conquered.* This was the expression he vomitted forth against God when his perjured soul was about falling into the arms of the devil.

Q. What is blasphemy against the saints and holy things?
A. To speak injuriously and derogatory of them.

16. "Blasphemy" is committed against the saints by speaking in any way of the Blessed Virgin, or of any of God's saints, that may be an outrage on their sanctity and memory; as, for example, that they were cruel and wicked during their lives, and that they are undeserving of the honours paid them; that they caused, whilst they lived, a great deal of disquiet, and brought about much misery and wretchedness. The worst species of blasphemy against the saints is that which infidels pronounce against the Blessed Virgin, the Queen of all saints, by denying that she was always a virgin, and saying that she was no other than an ordinary woman!

17. "Blasphemy" against sacred things and religion is committed by speaking injuriously of these things; as, for example, that the sacraments of the New Law are of no use or benefit to man—that the holy Scriptures are not the work of God—that they contain falsehoods—that religion is the work of man, and the invention of interested priests—that it is of no use or benefit to man—that all those who practise religion are just as bad as those who have no religion—that the Catholic Church is no better than the Protestant Church—that one form of religion is as good as another. It is, too, "blasphemy" against religion to mock and deride the ceremonies of the Church, to speak contemptuously of its holy practices, calling her sacraments and ordinances the *mummeries of superstition*. All such blasphemies dishonour God Himself, and are so many outrages against His infinite majesty and holiness. Of such kind of blasphemies Antichrist will be guilty, for of him it is said by St. John:—"He opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name, and His *tabernacle*, and them that dwell in heaven." (Apoc. xiii. 6.)

Q. Is blasphemy a great sin?
A. Yes; blasphemy is, of its own nature, a most grievous mortal sin.

18. "Blasphemy" is, indeed, dear children, a very enormous sin in the sight of God, because it directly attacks His infinite majesty and perfections, and insults and outrages His sacred name. To insult a king of this world, to load him with indignities, and to scoff and ridicule him, is considered a very great offence, and deserving the severest punishment; but how much greater is the offence, and how much more deserving of the severest punishment, is that of one who dares to vomit forth insults and indignities against the King of kings and the Sovereign Master of heaven and earth! Hence, we find blasphemy severely condemned in Scripture. In the Old Law it was God's ordinance that blasphemers should be stoned to death.

19. In the book of Leviticus we read that a young Israelite, who had blasphemed, was brought to Moses, and that Moses, having consulted the Lord, the blasphemer was ordered to be stoned: "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Bring forth the blasphemer without the camp, and let them that heard him put their hands upon his head, and let all the people stone him." (Lev. xxiv. 13, 14.) And accordingly he was stoned. When Sennacherib, King of Assyria, came to destroy Jerusalem, and sent to the good king Ezekias, his general, who spoke many blasphemous things against God, the Lord said to him by His prophet Isaias: "Whom hast thou reproached, and whom hast thou blasphemed?" And an angel was sent by God, who put to the sword one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians: "And it came to pass that night that an angel of the Lord came and slew, in the camp of the Assyrians, a hundred and eighty-five thousand .... and Sennacherib departed and went away .... And when he was worshipping in the temple

of Nesroch, his god, his two sons slew him with the sword." (4 Kings, xix. 22, 35.) We read in the second book of Machabees, that the impious Antiochus died a wretched death, his flesh rotting away, and worms growing out of all the parts of his body. "Thus, the murderer and *blasphemer*, being grievously struck, died in a miserable state in a strange country." (2 Mach. ix. 28.)

20. St. Paul tells us to "put away . . . . blasphemy —filthy speech out of your mouth." (Col. iii. 8.) St. Jerome says that, compared with blasphemy, every sin is small: "In fact, every sin, compared to blasphemy, is trifling." And St. Chrysostom says that, when a person blasphemes, his mouth should be instantly broken to pieces: "Give him a stripe—break his mouth." St. Louis, King of France, enacted a law which condemned all blasphemers to have their tongues pierced with a rod of heated iron. Tremble, then, dear children, at the very thought of using blasphemous language; conceive the greatest horror of it; and let the severe punishments inflicted on blasphemers be a warning to you against the commission of so frightful a sin.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE PUNISHMENT OF A BLASPHEMER.

Cardinal Baronius tells us, that an inhabitant of Constantinople, after having uttered a blasphemy, went to take a bath. He suddenly rushed out of the bath, saying that he felt the stroke of death; and while he continued to cry out that death was on him, he tore the flesh off his ribs and arms with his nails and teeth. To mitigate his pain, he was wrapped in a white sheet, but his torture was only increased. The sheet was taken away, and the skin came with it; and the miserable man, screaming and swooning away through pain, died in the hands of devils, who carried him off to be punished with the eternal torments of the damned.

THE SCOFFER OF RELIGION STRUCK BY GOD.

On Sunday, the 14th of February, 1841, a party were seated around a table, in a public-house in a *commune* of Youne, one of the departments of France, at the hour of the celebration of High Mass. At the moment when the tolling of the church bell announced the elevation of the Sacred Host, one of those seated at the table—and who was well known for the irregularity of his life, the corruption of his morals, and the sarcasms and the blasphemies that he was daily vomiting forth against God and religion—arose suddenly from the table, and gave vent to the most blasphemous expressions: "I must show you," said he, "what the priest is now doing." And then he commenced a blasphemous mockery of the most august ceremony of Christianity. In derision of the ceremony of consecration, and the act of adoration, he inclined over the table, and then bent the knee, pronouncing, at the same time, with a blasphemous tongue, the form of consecration. Again he made a second genuflection, and, to the amazement of all around, he did not arise, but remained motionless in that position, as if he were fastened to the floor! At first it was thought that he purposely remained kneeling, but it was soon seen that he was unable to arise unaided, and that he required the support of two persons to arise from his kneeling posture. Everyone became alarmed at what had happened to the blasphemer, and a perfect stillness reigned around. When those present recovered from their terror and surprise, and breathed a little more freely, they began to examine the cause of this extraordinary effect, and it was found that the blasphemer's knee was fractured, and the knee-pan shivered into two parts. The surgeon who examined the fracture said that, in his long experience, he had never seen one like it. All who heard of the accident, and those who were present when it occurred, agreed in thinking that the stroke came from God in punishment of the blasphemies uttered against Him. Of the circumstance thus related we have the strongest proof and the most authentic evidence. The parish in which this signal punishment of blasphemy was inflicted is called Venisy; the blasphemer is named S——, but is called by the people the *Terrible*, on account of his audacity and impiety.

THE UNHAPPY FATE OF A BLASPHEMER.

On Mount Benedict, one mile from Charlestown, near Boston, in America, was a convent of Ursuline nuns. On the night of the 14th of August, 1834, the Puritan populace, led on by their fanatical preachers, rose as one man, and with cries of fury and vengeance,

rushed towards the convent. They smashed the doors and the windows, then commenced plundering the church and convent, and after that set fire to the buildings. In the midst of the uproar one of the fanatics had mounted on the altar, and, with sacrilegious hand, seized the holy ciborium, emptied the sacred particles into his pocket, and, swelled with satanic pride, betook himself to a public-house at Charlestown. There, surrounded by a throng of eager listeners, was giving a boastful account of his impious exploit, when his eye lighted on an Irishman whom he knew to be a Catholic, and who regarded him with a countenance full of indignation and horror. Suddenly the wretched man drew from his pocket several of the consecrated Hosts, and, in a sneering and blasphemous tone said, as he held them up: "Here, behold your God! Why need you go any more to seek them in your church?" The Irishman stood mute with awe. At the same instant a sudden paleness overspread the features of the unhappy blasphemer, and he hastily left the room. A quarter of an hour, half an hour elapsed, and yet he did not return. A vague fear seized on the by-standers; with a presentment for which they could not account, they went in search of him; they found him lying on the ground dead. He died like Arius, having voided out his bowels. This extraordinary fact, which forms so striking an episode in the history of the desecrated convent, rests on the authority of eye-witnesses, some of whom were Protestants at the time, and have since become Catholics. It was well known to the whole population of Charlestown and Boston. The outrage would have been direfully revenged by the Irish Catholics but for the influence of the bishop, who, by his persuasive eloquence, induced more than twenty thousand men to return home peaceably and quietly.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. How do you prove that it is lawful to swear?
2. Did the prophets and apostles swear at any time?
3. Why is an unjust oath very injurious to God?
4. Is swearing to anything injurious to ourselves or to our neighbour, an unjust oath?
5. Are unjust oaths often pronounced by parents and masters?
6. Why should we not keep an unjust oath?
7. Were the Jews and Herod obliged to keep the oaths they had taken?
8. Why are we obliged to keep a lawful oath?

9. In what does the sin of perjury consist?
10. Why is perjury a very great sin?
11. Are there any other reasons why perjury is a great sin?
12. Is a witness always bound to tell the truth when he is on his oath?
13. What do you understand by blasphemy?
14. In how many ways may we be guilty of blasphemy?
15. How do we incur the guilt of blasphemy in the fourth and fifth place?
16. In what way do we commit blasphemy against the saints?
17. How are we guilty of blasphemy against sacred things and religion?
18. Why is it that blasphemy is a very grievous sin?
19. In what way were blasphemers punished in the Old Law?
20. What is said of blasphemy by St. Paul, St. Jerome, and St. Chrysostom?

PRACTICE.

1. Be always prepared to suffer every evil sooner than blaspheme the name of God.
2. When blasphemous expressions are uttered in your presence, at once check the blasphemer.
3. To atone for the many blasphemies vomited forth against God, often say, praise, honour, and glory to the name of God.

PRAYER.

O God of power and majesty! having now been taught how detestable in Thy sight is the sin of blasphemy, we sincerely regret our past guilt, if we have ever profaned Thy adorable name. We promise that evermore we shall never do or say anything that may be injurious to Thy honour; that we shall speak with the greatest respect of Thee and of the saints who are in the enjoyment of Thy glorious presence; and that no expression shall fall from our lips that may in any way be disrespectful to Thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON THE SABBATH, AND ON THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

Q. Say the third Commandment.

A. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

1. In the Old Law the *Sabbath*, or Saturday, as we call it, was ordered by God to be kept holy, and to be especially consecrated to His service. The word *Sabbath* signifies rest or repose from labour, for God, after having created the world in six days, rested on the seventh, or the *Sabbath*. God enforced the strictest observance of the Sabbath, saying: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day: six days shalt thou labour and do all thy works; but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, . . . and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." (Ex. xx. 8.) And all those who should violate the observance of the Sabbath, He threatened with the severest penalty—a penalty no less than death. "Keep my Sabbath," says God, "for it is holy unto you: he that shall profane it shall be put to death; he that shall do any work in it, his soul shall perish out of the midst of the people. Six days shall you do work; on the seventh

day is the Sabbath, the holy rest to the Lord. Every one that shall do any work on this day shall die." (Ex. xxxi. 14.)

2. We are told in the book of Numbers, that one day a Jew had been discovered in the wilderness gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, and that he was brought to Moses and Aaron, and that they put him into prison, not knowing what to do with him. "And the Lord said to Moses: Let that man die; let all the multitude stone him without the camp. And when they had brought him out they stoned him, and he died as the Lord had commanded." (Num. xv. 35, 36.) In the second book of Machabees it is recorded that Nicanor, in punishment of his impiety in despising the observance of the Sabbath, was, with his whole army, overthrown and slain on the field; that his head and hand, with his shoulder cut off, were carried in triumph to Jerusalem, that his tongue was cut out and given by pieces to birds, and his hand hanged up over against the temple. (2 Mach. xv. 33.)

Q. Why did God command, in the Old Law, the seventh day of the week to be kept holy rather than any other day?

A. Because the seventh day, or Saturday, was the day in which the Lord rested after having created all things in six days.

3. The creation commenced on the first day of the week, which is called Sunday, or the Lord's Day; it was concluded on Friday; and God rested on Saturday, that is, ceased from creating. Saturday or the Sabbath is, then, the repose of God; and it is on this account that, in the Old Law, He commanded all men to keep that day holy, in memory of the great work of the creation, and of the rest or repose which He took from His work after all was finished. Now, on this account, the seventh day had been kept holy by the servants of God from the beginning, and though it was interrupted during their captivity in Egypt, yet we find it renewed again, immediately on their coming into the wilderness,

even before the Commandments were given on Mount Sinai. Another reason for which the Israelites were commanded to keep holy the seventh day or Saturday was, that it should be a sign of their being the people of the true God; because by keeping this day in memory of the creation and of the repose which God took after all had been completed, they therefore acknowledged Him to be the great Creator of the world, and that they were His servants and people. God says to them, as we read in the book of Exodus: "See that you keep my Sabbath. . . It is an everlasting covenant between me and the children of Israel, and a perpetual sign." (Ex. xxxi. 13, 17.)

Q. Why was the observance of Saturday, or the seventh day of the week, changed in the New Law into that of Sunday, or first day of the week?

A. Because Sunday was the day on which Christ rose from the dead, and because it was on that day the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles.

4. This change was made by the Christian Church in the time of the Apostles, in honour of Jesus Christ, and on that account Sunday is called in Scripture the Lord's Day. We find in the Acts of the Apostles that on that day the first disciples were accustomed to meet to celebrate the holy mysteries and hear the word of God. The reasons for making the change were these: on Sunday—the first day of the week—our Saviour rose from the dead, having conquered sin and death, and redeemed us by His labourings and sufferings; and therefore it is called the Lord's Day. On Sunday, the first day of the week, the Apostles received their commission from Jesus Christ, with the same power and authority which He, as man, had received from His Father. On Sunday the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles to confirm them in their faith, and to strengthen, enlighten, and enable them to preach the Gospel. On Sunday, also, the faith of Christ was for the first time

solemnly published to the world, and the Christian Church formed and established. Add to all this, that the creation itself is also most fitly commemorated on Sunday, as it was on the first day of the week on which that great work was begun.

5. That the remembrance of the day on which these great mysteries took place should not be forgotten, the Apostles judged it proper to transfer to the Sunday that rest which was kept by the Jews on Saturday. St. Barnabas, a disciple of the Apostles, and a fellow-labourer of St. Paul in preaching the Gospel, says in his Catholic Epistle: "We celebrate the Sunday with joy, in memory of our Lord's resurrection, because it was on that day He arose from the dead."* St. Justin says that the Christians assembled on Sunday because it was the day on which the creation of the world began and the day of Christ's resurrection: "We are accustomed to meet together on the day of the Sun—the pagans call Sunday the day of the Sun—because it was on that day that God commenced to create the world, and on that day that our Saviour Jesus Christ arose from the dead." (*St. Justini opera.*) The same reasons are assigned for the observance of the Sunday by Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen, as we see in their works.

6. Another reason for this change from Saturday to Sunday was this: the seventh day was appointed for the Israelites, to be a sign of their being the people of God, as we have already seen; but, as on the coming and death of Christ they were no more His people, the observance of Saturday was no more necessary. Again, as the observance of the seventh day was a figure of the rest of Jesus Christ in the grave, this figure was fulfilled by His death and burial; and, therefore, like all the other ceremonials of the Old Law, which were figures of Christ, it was done away with on being fulfilled by Him.

* S. Barnabe, *Epist. Cath.*, aut. 1 des *Pères Apostoliques* de Cotelier.

7. But it must be carefully observed, that though the particular day of the week to be kept holy for the service of God was changed from Saturday to Sunday, yet the obligation of keeping holy one in seven remains in all its force; for even by the natural law we are obliged to set apart some time for the service of God and the care of our souls, and it is an express command that this time should be one day in the week, Sunday, or the Lord's day. "The precept of sanctifying the Sunday," says St. Liguori, "inasmuch as it commands us to honour God by some worship at some part of our life, belongs to the moral part of the law, according to St. Thomas and the generality of theologians; so that all are bound by a natural obligation to observe it; so much so, that every man *must* devote some portion of his life to holy duties." But inasmuch as it commands determinate days to be kept holy, it is a ceremonial precept: "Ceremonial, inasmuch as it ordains by precept a certain time for this duty." As a ceremonial precept it is no longer obligatory, because the Old Law has ceased.

Q. What is commanded by the third Commandment?

A. To spend the Sunday in prayer and other religious duties.

8. The Command itself is perfectly clear on this point. "By the third Commandment" we are not only forbidden to do all unnecessary servile works on Sunday, but we are also commanded to keep it holy, by serving and worshipping God—performing such works of piety and virtue as may redound to His honour and to the salvation of our own souls. Our whole time, indeed, belongs to God; but as it is impossible for us, on account of worldly duties and the necessities of this life, to devote every day of the week to these holy exercises which belong immediately to Him, we are bound to consecrate one day, at least, out of the seven, for the performance

of such exercises. Therefore, we should "spend the Sunday in prayer"—that is, in raising our hearts to God often on that day—adoring His infinite majesty, greatness, and power—praising and blessing His holy name for His great mercy and goodness towards us—returning Him thanks for the many favours, graces, and blessings He has conferred, and is daily conferring, on us; and earnestly entreating Him to continue those favours and blessings to us. In *praying* thus, and in the performance of "other religious duties," we should "spend the Sunday."

Q. Which are the chief duties of religion in which we should spend the Sunday?

A. Hearing Mass devoutly, attending vespers, or evening prayers, reading moral and pious books, and going to Communion.

9. The design of Almighty God, in forbidding us to work on the Lord's day, is that we may have sufficient leisure and time for those great and important duties which regard His worship and our own salvation. He expressly commands us to keep that day holy; but to keep it holy we should spend it in the exercise of those religious acts which tend to the promotion of His worship and the interest of our own souls. Everything that has a reference to these two ends go together; for whatever tends to the worship of God must necessarily conduce to the welfare of our souls; and whatever contributes to the well-being of our souls must be most agreeable to God, and must tend to His worship. "The chief duties of religion in which we should spend the Sunday," in order to sanctify it, are the following:

10. (1.) "Hearing Mass devoutly" by assisting at the holy and solemn sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. From the earliest ages of the Church, during even the direst persecutions, the faithful have been always assiduous in assisting at Mass on the Lord's

day. St. Justin, who flourished in the second century, makes mention of this practice, and speaks of it, not as anything new, but as an old and universally established usage. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that the faithful assembled on Sunday in the place where the *breaking of bread* took place. The sacred mysteries was called the *breaking of bread*, in order that the infidels should not know their nature. From the earliest ages to the present time, the Church has always insisted on the necessity of hearing Mass on Sundays. This duty is strictly enjoined on all, by her express command; and, therefore, can never be neglected without a grievous sin, unless real necessity excuse it.

11. (2.) "Attending vespers or evening prayers" is another chief religious duty in which we should spend the Sunday. True, that "attending vespers" is not *commanded*, nor is it rigorously enforced, as the hearing of Mass is; but yet it is the spirit of the Church that all her children should attend at her public services, "evening prayers," the preaching of the word of God, the benediction of the most Blessed Sacrament; and those of the faithful who are really desirous to sanctify the Sunday, attend at these public offices. They well know the value of assisting at public prayers, and they ever fear to deprive themselves, by their negligence and tepidity, of the abundant graces which all those obtain who meet together to pray in the name of Jesus Christ. They who habitually neglect "attending vespers," must be considered slothful or indifferent to the sanctification of their souls. Such persons should consider the example of the first Christians, who not only spent the first day of the week in God's service, but attended the public prayers every day; and so particular were they in this respect, that absence from them was looked upon as great negligence.

12. (3.) If we wish to comply with the spirit of the Church, we should also attend at catechetical instruc-

tions on Sunday. To what are we to attribute the gross ignorance of religion prevailing among so many Christians, but to the neglect of attending exhortations or catechetical instructions? Even among those whom we call the *respectable classes*, we shall discover an alarming amount of ignorance with regard to the doctrines of their religion; and this ignorance proceeds from inattention to the Catechism, and an unwillingness to listen to those plain practical discourses which are explanatory of the different articles of Christian belief. And yet such are obliged, not only by a precept of the Church, but also by a more stringent precept—that of the divine natural law—to learn and know what their religion teaches; for a knowledge of the principal parts of the Catechism is absolutely necessary to salvation. To remain in wilful ignorance of the principles and duties of our holy religion, is to close the gates of heaven against us. And can you, instructed Christians—can you, fathers and mothers, sanctify the Lord's day better than in conducting your children to public instructions, at which you and they will hear those truths that will enlighten the mind and soften the heart? "Attending vespers" and instructions is then the most useful, the most edifying, and the most excellent way of sanctifying the Sunday. If persons cannot attend "evening prayers" and instructions, on account of their being at a great distance from the Church, or through some other inconvenience, they should at least say prayers at home, and have the Catechism taught to their children and domestics.

13. (4.) "Reading moral and pious books" is also one of the chief duties of religion, in which we should spend the Sunday. The reading of moral and pious books on Sunday is a duty which should never be neglected, for such books are the fountains of heavenly knowledge, and through them God speaks to our souls, and enlightens them with the knowledge of His heavenly

will. To learn virtue we must be instructed; but we receive instruction not from masters only, but also by "reading moral and pious books." We cannot on every Sunday, perhaps, hear our pastors and directors, to learn from them the way of virtue. Their instructions, their admonitions, their exhortations, their counsels, continue but for a time in our memory: we easily forget them, if they be not maintained and renewed by the reading of books and meditation upon holy things. The wonderful conversion of St. Augustin was begun by the reading of a book called "Hortensius," treating of wisdom, as he himself relates in the third book of his Confessions. It was forwarded by an account of the conversion of two courtiers—reclaimed by reading the life of St. Anthony—and was at last perfected by reading the New Testament, which a voice from heaven commanded him to read, saying, *take and read.* Oh, the great force of pious reading! How is it possible that so holy and powerful a means of the conversion of souls should be so much neglected? Have, then, dear children, good books, if you can at all procure them; for a pious book is one of the greatest treasures that you can possess: read them on Sundays, not only to yourself, but also to all others who require instruction, and who themselves cannot read. In your homes, on Sunday evenings, collect the uninstructed around you, and distribute among them the word of God. Ah! by so doing, how usefully employed will those evenings be!

14. (5.) "Going to communion" on Sundays is also one of the "chief duties of religion," and one that cannot be too strongly recommended. In communion, Jesus Christ gives us His body and blood, under the species of bread and wine, that His grace and love may be augmented in our souls. As earthly bread nourishes the body, so this heavenly bread nourishes the soul, and makes it advance in divine love. On *Sundays* we should earnestly desire to partake of the rich banquet of Jesus

Christ, and to eat of that heavenly food, for it serves to cleanse us from venial, and to preserve us from mortal sins. If a soul be a long time without this divine food, she scarcely has strength to resist temptation, and therefore she easily falls into sin. "To go to communion every Sunday," says St. Augustin, "I persuade and exhort every one, provided his soul be without any affection to sin." As St. Augustin thus strenuously exhorts us to communicate every *Sunday*, let us endeavour to comply with his advice as far as we are able; for by so doing we shall perform a very *religious duty*, and by worthily eating beauty, purity, and goodness itself in *Holy Communion*, we will become altogether fair, pure, and virtuous.

Q. Is the hearing of the Mass sufficient to sanctify the Sunday?

A. No; a part of the day should also be given to prayer and other good works.

15. "To sanctify the Sunday" perfectly, "the hearing of Mass" is not sufficient; there is something more required from us. The celebration of Mass does not generally occupy more than one half-hour's time, or at most one hour, and the entire Sunday is the Lord's day, the day set apart for worshipping and serving Him. It is, then, a great mistake to imagine that because we spend in church on Sunday a half hour hearing Mass, we may therefore make it a day of bodily rest, and spend it in idleness, lounging about, doing nothing, or in vain amusements. Although the Church does not bind us by any positive precept to spend the Sunday in other religious exercises except that of hearing Mass, yet if we are desirous of entering into the spirit of the Church, we should, besides hearing Mass, give also a part of the day "to prayer and other good works." And not a small part of it only should we employ in "prayer and other good

works," but such a portion of it as may be justly esteemed the day; but a half-hour or an hour is not the day.

16. A good part of Sunday should be spent "in prayer;" that is, in adoring God, acknowledging Him for your Sovereign Lord and Creator; giving thanks to Him for all the benefits you have received—the benefit of your creation, your redemption, and that of your being brought up in the bosom of the Church, and instructed in the truths of salvation; imploring pardon of all the sins of your life, and begging of God the grace to employ the remainder of your life in His service and love. Saying the *rosary* or *beads* at home on Sundays is a very pious practice, and one that will draw down many favours and blessings on all those who recite that form of prayer. The blessed Mother of God will be a powerful intercessor with her Son for all her devout clients, and will obtain for them all those graces necessary for salvation.

17. In praying in this manner, and in performing "other good works," as, for example, examining our conscience to see in what way we have spent the past week, preparing for the sacraments, pious conversation, and the like, we shall, indeed, "sanctify the Sunday." But can those be said to "sanctify the Sunday," who, after spending a half-hour "hearing Mass," pass the rest of the day in sauntering about, in chatting and prating with any they meet, in household business, in play, in dressing themselves and their children? It cannot be said, certainly, that in doing these things they commit a great sin; but when these things take up so much time, they hinder and prevent those works of piety by which alone we can perfectly "sanctify the Sunday."

Q. What particular good works are recommended to sanctify the Sunday?

A. The works of mercy, spiritual and corporal, and particularly to instruct the ignorant in the way of salvation by word and example. (Dan. xii. 3.)

18. The "particular good works recommended to sanctify the Sunday" are, in the first place, "the works of mercy, spiritual and corporal." The Sunday cannot be spent in a more holy way than in the performance of merciful and charitable works: "Religion, clean and undefiled before God and the Father," says St. James, "is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulations." (James, i. 27.) Of the "spiritual" works of mercy, the chief one is that of counselling and admonishing poor sinners with a view to their conversion. We cannot do anything more pleasing to God, and more profitable to ourselves, than leading our erring brother from the evil of his ways. We cannot be more usefully engaged on Sundays than in the "spiritual" work of advising those who are negligent of their salvation—relieving them in their difficulties and doubts—confirming them in their good resolutions, and thereby leading them into the way of salvation. St. James says, "that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." (James, v. 20.) And St. John Chrysostom says, that "a single soul that we shall have gained to Christ, may efface in us an infinity of sins, and become the price of our own sanctification." (Hom. 39.)

19. The "corporal" works of mercy are—*feeding the hungry,* supplying with food and drink all those poor, miserable creatures who are perishing from hunger or thirst; *clothing the naked,* furnishing clothes to those who have only a few tattered rags to protect them from the piercing blasts and the biting frosts of winter; *visiting the sick,* in order to afford them consolation and

hope, by relieving them in their afflictions, soothing them in their sorrows, and cheering their drooping spirits; and lastly, contributing to the decent *burial of the dead.* All these are "works of mercy," most useful to our neighbour and most pleasing to God, and therefore "recommended to sanctify the Sunday."

20. The work of mercy which is "particularly" recommended to sanctify the Sunday, is "to instruct the ignorant in the way of salvation, by word and example." We cannot do anything on Sundays more pleasing to God, and more conducive to the spiritual welfare of others, than that of instructing "the ignorant." If it be agreeable to God to assist our poor brethren when they are hungry, cold, and naked, how much more so must it be when we aid and assist them in their *spiritual* want and destitution? The *soul* is of far greater concern than the *body*, and the greatest act of charity that we can perform is that of assisting poor souls in their way to heaven, by instructing them, when *ignorant,* in the duties of their religion. We should, then, become members of the Christian Doctrine Society, or of some other society that may be established in our parish for the "instruction of the ignorant in the way of salvation." By so doing we shall give God honour and glory, we shall give the ignorant a knowledge of their religious duties, and obtain for ourselves a crown of immortal glory. "They that instruct many to justice," says the Prophet Daniel, "shall shine as stars for all eternity." (Dan. xii. 3.) And St. John Chrysostom says, that "he who macerates his body by austerities, merits less than he who gains a soul to God."

21. Not only "by word" should we "instruct the ignorant," but also "by example," for our instructions will be of little avail if they be not aided by our *good example.* We may instruct, correct, and admonish, but if our conduct belie our words, our instructions will be fruitless. We ought, then, be careful that nothing

should appear in our conduct except what may edify others. Our actions, our movements, our words should be such as to give others an esteem for virtue and piety. It has been often said, and with truth, that *example is better than precept*, for many there are who, despising counsels and admonitions, have been drawn at last out of sin, and brought into the paths of virtue and holiness, by *good example*.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE FOREST SCENE ON SUNDAY.

M. de Cheverus, Archbishop of Bourdeaux, was in early life a missionary in Africa. After having visited the Catholics of his mission, he set out for the country of Penobscot and Passamaquody, which was inhabited by a wild race of people, who were continually roaming through the forests, and whose lives were spent between hunting and fishing. Conducted by a guide, he walked for many days through a thick forest, and on one morning, which was Sunday, he heard at some distance loud music, proceeding, as it were, from many voices singing in unison. M. de Cheverus listened for awhile, then walked on farther, and, to his great astonishment, he recognized in the music a piece quite familiar to him—the "Royal Mass" of Dumont, which often is heard in our cathedrals and churches on solemn festivals. What must have been his astonishment! and what sweet emotions must his heart have experienced! In this scene in the lonely forest he witnessed a spectacle both sublime and touching; for what could more move the heart than to behold a wild race so faithful in the solemn observance of the Sunday, though no priest had been among them for fifty years? And what could be more sublime than those sacred pieces, presided over by piety alone, resounding far and wide through the vast and dense forest?

SIR THOMAS MORE AND HIS RESPECT FOR SUNDAY.

Sir Thomas More, Chancellor of England, was an ardent supporter of Catholic belief. For his sincere attachment to it he was at last imprisoned. When going to chapel on Sundays he always

appeared very well dressed. One day some one asked him how it was he was so particular in his dress on Sunday, as there were so few to see him in a prison; and he at once made answer: "I have always dressed myself with care on Sundays and on festivals, but it was not to please the world, or through respect for any mortal, that I did so, but through respect and love for God."

ST. NICHON AND HIS ZEAL FOR THE DUE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

St. Nichon, after having preached in Crete almost twenty years, and settled all the churches in that island in good order, passed to the continent in Europe, and announced the word of God in Peloponnesus, Achaia, Epirus, and other parts of Greece, confirming his doctrine with many miracles. One Sunday, when he was giving out vespers in Peloponnesus, the governor of the place, named Gregory, amused himself playing ball near the church. St. Nichon, very much displeased at hearing so much noise during the celebration of the office, left the church, and severely reproved the ball-players. Gregory, who had lost the game, flew into a violent passion against the saint, and drove him out of the city. Then, commencing another game, he was at once struck with paralysis and sharp pains through every part of his body. He employed all the remedies within his power to alleviate his sufferings, but in vain. By the advice of the bishop of the place he recalled St. Nichon, and begged his pardon for what he had done. The saint reproached him not, but immediately cured him; and from that time Gregory became one of the most zealous defenders of virtue and piety.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Did God require a very strict observance of the Sabbath?
2. Were those who violated the Sabbath punished severely?
3. What is the reason that Saturday was appointed to be kept holy?
4. Assign the reasons why the observance of Saturday was changed to Sunday?
5. What is said by St. Barnabas and the early Christian writers on the subject?

6. Can you give any other reasons for the change of the Sabbath?

7. By what law are we bound to keep Sunday holy?

8. What are we required to do on Sunday by the third Commandment?

9. In what manner should we keep Sunday holy?

10. Is the hearing of Mass on Sunday a necessary duty of religion?

11. Is attending at evening prayers on Sunday a duty of religion?

12. What do you say of attendance at catechetical instructions on Sunday?

13. Is the reading of pious books on Sunday a duty of religion?

14. Is going to communion on Sunday a duty to be recommended?

15. To sanctify the Sunday is there anything required but hearing Mass?

16. What should be the subject of our prayer on Sunday?

17. Should we spend a good part of the day in prayer, examination of conscience, and the like?

18. Are the spiritual and corporal works of mercy recommended on Sunday?

19. What do you mean by the corporal works of mercy?

20. What work of mercy is particularly recommended on Sunday?

21. Will our instructions be of any avail without good example?

PRACTICE.

1. Be particular in assisting at Mass on Sunday, and also at evening prayers.

2. Pay, on every Sunday, a visit to our Lord in the holy sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist.

3. Instruct every Sunday in your locality those who may be ignorant of their religious duties.

PRAYER.

My God! we give Thee thanks for the instruction that we have just listened to. We have now learned the great obligation under which we lie of sanctifying the Sunday. But, alas! how have we

acquitted ourselves of that important duty hitherto? In what manner have we assisted at Mass, at evening prayers, at instructions? Has it not been without attention, without piety, without respect, and even how often have we not attended at all! Pardon us, dear Lord, for not having sanctified the Sunday as we should have done; we now regret our past profanations of that holy day, and we resolve to spend it in future in the practice of virtue and holiness. Amen.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON SERVILE WORKS FORBIDDEN ON SUNDAY.

Q. What is forbidden by the third Commandment?

A. All unnecessary servile work, and whatever may hinder the due observance of the Lord's day, or tend to profane it.

1. We have already seen, dear children, that in order to sanctify the Sunday we should hear Mass devoutly, attend at evening prayers and instructions, read good books, and approach holy Communion. But that alone is not sufficient; there is something more required from us, and required under pain of sin, and that is, to abstain from "all unnecessary servile work, and whatever may hinder the due observance of the Lord's day." *Works* or worldly actions may be divided into three classes, namely—1. *Servile works;* 2. *Liberal works;* 3. *Common works.*

2. *Servile works,* which are prohibited on Sundays, are all such bodily works as are commonly performed by servants, tradesmen, and labourers, for gaining their

bread, and which, as they regard the concerns of the body and of this world, naturally engross our minds, and call off our attention from those duties which the sanctification of the Sunday requires from us. Carrying loads and burdens, either by oneself or with cattle, and, as a consequence, markets, fairs, buying and selling, may be classed under the works called *servile*. *Liberal works* are those which engage the mind more than the body, and which, consequently, are usually performed by *free* and *independent* persons. Under this class may be placed *drawing*, writing, and the like. *Common works* are those which engage the mind equally as the body, and which may be performed by all classes of persons, as they require neither profession nor trade. In this class are comprised walking, playing, hunting, fishing, and the like.

3. "Servile works," and only *servile* works, are strictly prohibited on the Lord's day. This appears from the *Commandment* itself, for it begins with the word *remember:* "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day;" and this shows the importance of this duty, and how strictly God requires it to be observed; for even among ourselves, when masters give any orders to their servants, which they are resolved should be obeyed, nothing is more common than to use the word "REMEMBER." We are, then, prohibited from all unnecessary *servile* works in the strictest manner: "In it thou shalt do no work. We can neither plough, nor sow, nor reap, nor mow, dig, weave, plant, carry burdens, build walls, nor construct hedges. All work of that description, performed without *necessity* on Sunday, is prohibited. We can neither do these things ourselves, nor allow our children or servants to do them. Tradesmen of every description should not work on Sunday. Neither masons, carpenters, painters, bakers, nor any other description of mechanics, should be engaged at work on Sundays, though they should not receive even

the least recompense for their labour. All such work is *servile*, whether it be paid for or not, and therefore "forbidden by the third Commandment." The Church, with the whole weight of her authority, forbids the same; and Christ declares that "he that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican." (Matt. xviii. 17.)

Q. Are liberal and common works allowed on Sunday?
A. Yes; there is no prohibition against performing those works.

4. *Liberal works* are allowed on Sunday, so that after having heard Mass, and assisted at other exercises of piety, we can, without sin, read, write, design, compose, or play music, and the like. All such works, equally as *common* or *intermediate* works, are permitted on Sundays and holidays, even though performed for gain. This is the doctrine of theologians who follow the opinion of St. Thomas. "For corporal works," says the saint, "which belong not to the spiritual worship of God, are termed servile, inasmuch as they appertain to those who are in servitude; but inasmuch as they are common to servants and freemen, they are not termed servile."

5. Hence, according to the more common and probable opinion, it is not forbidden on Sundays and holidays to travel, or to go fowling, or to fish; that is to say, that the Church, though not absolutely approving of these things, does not in positive terms condemn them, when they are done for recreation, and when too great a part of the day is not taken up in such amusements, because such works are at least common to persons in a servile and liberal condition of life. But fishing and fowling, when attended with great preparation and labour, appear to be *servile* works, because too much dissipation—incompatible with "the due observance of the Lord's day"—results from them. This, too, may be inferred from the Canon Law, in which

the Pope has given a *dispensation* to fish for *sardines*. The third Commandment forbids also, on Sunday, all courts of justice, processes, trials, examination of witnesses, pronouncing or executing sentences, and the like, because these things take up much time, very much engross the mind, "and hinder the due observance of the Lord's day, or tend to profane it."

Q. Is it ever lawful to work on Sundays and holidays?

A. Yes; servile work is allowed on Sundays and holidays, in some cases.

6. There are cases in which "servile work" on Sundays and holidays is allowed. First, *real necessity* excuses *servile* work on Sundays and holidays; as for example, to prepare food for man and beast, which could not be provided before, and which, if a person did not work on Sunday, could not be procured for the day; or when a person works in order to avoid a grievous loss. Thus, our Saviour excused His disciples for plucking the ears of corn and eating them on the Sabbath day, and declared them innocent in doing so. Hence, it is lawful to do whatever is necessary for the day, such as to cook food, to arrange and put the house in order. It is lawful, too, to reap corn, to mow hay, to gather fruits, when these things are in danger of being destroyed by wind or water.

7. Secondly, persons are justified in working on Sundays, when the work is performed through *charity*, in assisting the poor and distressed, provided this be done without any return, either in money or work, as a reward or payment for it; for if one should assist a poor person on Sunday or a holiday, on condition that the poor man should give him a day in return, it is the same in the sight of God as if he had worked on the Sunday or holiday himself. We find our Saviour doing works of charity on the Sabbath, and defending His conduct by unanswerable arguments, against the Pharisees, who censured Him for what He did. And the reason is,

because charity is the end of the law, and therefore no law can prevent works of real charity. Thirdly, *piety* excuses servile work on Sundays and holidays, when such work is done for the service of God and the interests of religion, without any view to temporal gain or reward. Thus our Saviour says: "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath day the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are without blame?" (Matt. xii. 5.) But, in all these cases, care must be taken that such work do not interfere with nor hinder the attendance at Mass.

8. Though real necessity justifies persons in working on Sundays and holidays, those cannot be excused who undertake more work than they can perform within the six days of the week, and on that account habitually remain up after twelve o'clock on Saturday night, and trespass for a considerable time on the Sunday. Neither can agriculturists be excused from sin who require their men to work on Sundays and holidays, falsely persuading themselves that there is necessity for so doing, when in reality the work could, without any great inconvenience, be deferred until the following day. In acting in this manner they render themselves unworthy of the blessings of heaven, and draw down on themselves the maledictions of God. *Working on Sunday has never enriched anyone, but, on the contrary, brings down many evils and misfortunes.* "But if you will not hearken to me," says the Prophet Jeremias, "to sanctify the Sabbath day, and not to carry burdens, and not to bring them in by the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, I will kindle a fire at the gates thereof, and it shall devour the houses of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." (Jer. xvii. 27.)

Q. Is it lawful to amuse oneself on Sundays or holidays by taking recreation?

A. Yes; it is lawful to refresh the mind with innocent amusement on these days.

9. Sunday is not only a day of prayer, but also a day of rest or repose. We can, then, on that day, after having attended to the exercises of piety and religion, take some innocent recreation—walk, pay a visit, spend an evening with some of our friends. This is not only lawful, but it is even laudable, when one's state of body or mind requires it. But it must be confessed that amusements and recreations are not the proper means of sanctifying the time spent at them; and, therefore, they are only allowed as a relaxation of the mind, when the proper duties of the day have been discharged, and, therefore, they should be used with great mod ration.

10. It is very easy to understand how much opposed to the sanctification of the Sundays and holidays are sports kept up during the greatest part of the day, and parties of pleasure, at which dancing and singing are not discontinued until a very late hour at night. Can there be a greater profanation of the Lord's day than to spend it in taverns, whiskey-shops, and in other infamous houses, where there is scarcely a sentence spoken that is not a compound of blasphemy, swearing, and obscenity? Ah! what frightful ravages are caused on Sunday to society by the frequenting of public-houses! Sacraments neglected, prayer given up, instructive discourses unattended to, and the great truths of salvation forgotten! Whilst the pastor is expounding, from the sacred chair of truth, the doctrines of wisdom and holiness, there is a chair outside that has more attractions, and that is the chair of pestilence in the public-house! There blasphemy holds the place of prayer; there obscene songs hold the place of vesper hymns! Every sentiment of faith and piety is extinguished in these dwellings of infamy and debauchery, where everything sacred is turned into derision, the practices of religion mocked at, and the ministers of God spoken of in terms of sarcasm and ridicule. Oh! who can tell the profanations and

blasphemies that are committed on Sunday in those places where parties of pleasure are held!

11. "A Jew," says St. Augustin, "would do much better to labour in the field than to raise sedition on the stage; and their wives had better card wool on the Sabbath than spend the day in immodest dances." Is it worse to gather a few sticks to make a fire, than to spend the Sundays and holidays in gaming and drinking? Does it offend God more to gather a few sticks than to spend the greater part of the day amidst the profanation of the whiskey-shop? Do you think that drunkenness and debauchery on Sunday are less provoking to heaven than making hedges or fences? Ah! if the performance of servile works—lawful in themselves—on Sundays, be so severely punished by God, what mercy, think you, will such find who spend that day in drunkenness, blasphemy, obscenity, and impurity? Fly, dear children, at every time, but particularly on Sundays, public-houses, dancing-parties, and night entertainments of every description; for if you frequent such places of amusement, you will soon find that your innocence and virtue have been lost and destroyed, and that guilt and sin have deeply stained your souls.

Q. Is the sin greater by being committed on the Lord's day?

A. Most certainly.

12. *Mortal sin* committed on any day, is, indeed, a grievous offence against God, and a gross insult offered Him. But can there be a greater outrage perpetrated against the infinite majesty of God, than that of employing in the service of the devil the very day that our Creator has marked as peculiarly His own, and which He tells us to "remember to keep holy," and to devote to His service? Is there not particular malice in devoting

to criminal excesses and filthy crimes, that day, which, above all others, should be spent in works of piety?

13. It may be said that sins, however enormous they be, are not *servile works*, and that *servile works* alone are those which God prohibits us from doing on Sunday. But, as St. Thomas says, sins are works more than *servile*. A Christian's attention is withdrawn from divine things, more by sin than by any corporal or manual work; and, therefore, he who commits sin, contravenes the precept more than he who performs any manual labour, which, in itself, is lawful. *Servile* works are sometimes allowed, under certain circumstances, on Sundays and holidays; but sin is always repugnant to the honour of God, and cannot be committed under any circumstances, or on any day, without grievously offending Him; and how much less on Sundays and holidays! "*Servile* works are forbidden," says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, "not because they are improper and evil in themselves, but they withdraw from the worship of God, which is the great end of the Commandment. The faithful should be still more careful not to profane the Sabbath by sin, which not only withdraws the mind from the contemplation of divine things, but entirely alienates us from the love of God."

14. That "sin is the greater by being committed on the Lord's day," cannot be denied. Is not an insult offered to a king on some solemn day—his birth-day, or the anniversary of his coronation, for example—when he attends to receive the homage of his courtiers, considered a more grievous offence than it would be if offered on any other day? But must not the same be said of wicked Christians who commit sin on Sundays, and thus boldly outrage God on His own day? St. Bonaventure considers the crime of the Jews in crucifying our Lord aggravated by their waiting for the solemn time of the Pasch for the execution of their impious design. And

should not the same be said of him who commits sin on Sunday?

15. Entertain, then, dear children, the greatest horror of submitting yourselves to the slavery of the devil, which is sin. You should at all times fly from sin as the greatest evil, but you should be particularly watchful against it on Sundays and holidays, because on these days sin is a greater offence to God than on any other day of the week.

When we come to treat of the "First Commandment of the Church," we shall speak of the manner in which Mass should be heard, and also we shall explain the duties required from us on holidays.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE MERCHANT AND THE ARTIZAN ON THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

In the commencement of the present century, there lived at Lyons a shoemaker named Berthier, who was seen working in his stall every Sunday morning. A merchant lived in the house opposite the stall of Berthier, and being a religious man, and most observant of the sanctification of the Lord's day, was grieved at seeing it profaned by his neighbour. One day he spoke to him on the subject, and represented to him how much he offended God by working on Sunday; but the shoemaker made answer that it was necessity that compelled him to work. "You, sir," said he, "are a very rich man, and you can afford to remain idle on Sunday; but I am poor, and have a large family to support, and it would be a great loss to me if I did not work on that day; besides, I am never able to finish on Saturday night the work that had been ordered during the week, and my customers must be supplied on Sunday." The merchant, shaking his head at these excuses, kindly said to him: "It is very far from my intention that your family should suffer any loss; and I now promise you, that if you do not work on Sunday, and that you regularly attend church for the next six months, I will compensate you for any loss that you may thereby sustain. Do you accept my

offer?" "Willingly," replied the shoemaker; "for it is much easier for me to sit in the church than to work, particularly when you are so kind as to compensate me for any loss that I may suffer." They both then shook hands, and the engagement was closed. When the six months had passed by, the merchant sought out the shoemaker, and said to him: "Very good, neighbour; you have faithfully kept your word, and I, too, will keep mine. Now tell me the loss you have suffered for the last six months by not working on Sunday, and I will make up for it to the last farthing." "Indeed," replied the other, "I must candidly say, my dear sir, that I have suffered not the loss of a cent, and all the claim I have on you is that of your accepting my best thanks for the advice you gave me. During those last six months everything has gone on well with me. At first I experienced some little inconvenience in not having my work finished on Saturday night, but the consideration that you would recompense me for any loss, and also the promise I made you, made me faithful in the due observance of the Sunday. I have been regular in my attendance at church, and the instructions given there every Sunday have made good impressions on my mind. I have learned many things with regard to my salvation, of which before I was completely ignorant. Having, during the past months gone to confession, and been nourished with the body and blood of our Lord, I now experience a content and happiness to which before I was a stranger. Hitherto I was of a violent temper, but now I am mild and gentle; and yet my frame is stronger and my arm more vigorous than before." "But, my good friend," said the merchant, "how are matters going on between you and your family, for formerly you must allow that there was scarcely anything heard in your house but quarrels and bickerings?" "True, indeed," replied the shoemaker, with a blush upon his cheek; "but the case is altered now. Before, I always believed that my wife was always wrong, and that I was always right, and my anger and obstinacy was such as to cause scenes, the very thought of which now makes me blush; but now peace and concord reign always in the house." Very much moved at this recital, the merchant drew forth his purse, and offered him two ducats, saying: "Take this as a remembrance of my affection. As when you made the promise I could not anticipate the happy results, I, since then, laid by every month a sum to compensate you for the loss you might have sustained. Here is, then, what has been laid by for the six months, and receive it as a token of the delight I feel at your following my counsel. You have now seen from your experience that God will aid those who endeavour to do to the best of their ability what He requires of them."

THE MILLER WHO PROFANED THE SUNDAY FOUND DEAD.

A miller of the parish of St. John de Corconé, in Vendee, was so possessed of the demon of avarice, that there was scarcely a Sunday on which he did not work. During the High Mass and other offices, he was seen working at his mill. On one particular festival he went as usual, and began to work away. In the evening he returned not. His wife was every moment expecting him, but in vain, for he appeared not. When it was becoming rather late, she went out to look for him, and—frightful spectacle!—she beheld him dead and extended along the ground, with his entire body pierced with something like stakes. In setting out from his house in the morning, he complained of there being no wind, and said that he was going to arrange the mill, so that an advantage might be taken of the first breeze that would spring up. He waited some hours in expectation of the wind; he saw the country people going to church, and through shame—for he knew he was doing wrong—hid himself. When they had passed on, he stood up and began to watch the clouds. On a sudden the wind sprung up, the wings of the mill turned immediately around, and the points coming in contact with his body, he was cast violently some distance from the place in which he was standing, and died in pain and agony! His death produced a great sensation in every part of the country around; for it was considered, and justly, a stroke from the hands of God, to mark his horror of the profanation of Sunday.

DECLARATION OF BISHOPS WITH REGARD TO THE TRANSGRESSIONS OF THE SABBATH.

In the Sixth Council, held at Parisin the year 829, the bishops, after condemning marketing, bargaining, and all country business on the Sundays, add: "There are many who have been struck with thunder for working on these days; of many of these we have been eye-witnesses ourselves, and of many more we have heard by the relation of others. There are also others who have been punished by a sudden contraction of their nerves; and more have been struck dead by fire, and for their sins, their bodies and their very bones have in a moment been reduced to ashes. Besides, many other terrible judgments there have been, and still are, whereby it is sufficiently declared how much God is offended by the profanation of the Sabbath day."

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. In order to sanctify the Sunday, is it sufficient to hear Mass?
2. Into how many classes are works or worldly actions divided?
3. Enumerate the various sort of servile works which are forbidden on Sunday?
4. Are liberal and common works allowed on Sunday?
5. Are common works which require a great deal of preparation and labour lawful on Sundays?
6. Will necessity excuse us from working on Sundays?
7. Do charity and piety render lawful servile works on Sundays?
8. What is to be said of those who perform on Sundays those works which could be dispensed until the following day?
9. Can we amuse ourselves on Sundays?
10. What are we to think of those who frequent public-houses on Sundays?
11. Are drunkenness and impiety on Sundays more offensive to God than working on that day?
12. Why is sin committed on Sunday so detestable in the sight of God?
13. Is a person's mind drawn off from divine things more by sin than by servile works?
14. How does it appear that sin is the greater by being committed on Sunday?
15. Should we have a horror of committing sin on Sunday?

PRACTICE.

1. Make it your constant practice never to work on Sundays or holidays without real necessity.
2. If necessity or charity require that you should work on Sunday, first obtain leave from your pastor.
3. Scrupulously avoid public-houses, parties of pleasure, and dancing-houses on Sundays.

PRAYER.

We acknowledge, dear Lord! that hitherto we have profaned by unnecessary works the Sunday which should have been consecrated to Thy service. But we now promise that henceforward we shall spend that holy day about Thy altars and in the exercise of piety; and if we take recreation on that day, it shall be moderate and

innocent, and that no sinful exercises shall be committed by us. We shall avoid with care whatever may lead to dissipation—flying far from those houses and places where Thy adorable name is blasphemed, and where Thy commands are grossly violated. We shall so spend the Sunday as to render it an image of that eternal day which we hope to spend in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN TO PARENTS.

Q. Say the fourth Commandment?
A. Honour thy father and thy mother.

1. This Commandment is thus expressed in the book of Deuteronomy: "Honour thy father and mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that thou mayest live a long time, and it may be well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God will give thee." (Deut. v. 16.) By the "fourth Commandment," dear children, four principal duties are required of you, with regard to your fathers and mothers; you should *love* them, *respect* them, *obey* them, and *assist* them in their corporal and spiritual necessities.

2. In the first place, you are obliged by the fourth Commandment to *love* your parents. Religion requires that you love all men, even your enemies; how much more so does it require that you love those who are so closely allied to you as your parents, and to whom you are indebted for almost everything you possess! To your parents, under God, you owe your very being. It is through them that God has given you existence. After having brought you into this world, they provided for your preservation and well-being, at a time when

the smallest thing you could not do to help yourselves; for at our birth we are more helpless and miserable than any other living creature. Food, raiment, care, education, and every other thing necessary in our young days, we owe to our parents. "Remember," says Ecclesiasticus, "that thou hadst not been born but through them."

3. Without your parents you would not now be in existence; you would be deprived of all the spiritual advantages that you now possess in this world—the happiness of knowing God, of loving Him, of serving Him, of receiving Jesus Christ in the blessed Eucharist, and of expecting to be happy for ever in heaven. How is it possible that we can refuse loving our parents, who have given so many proofs of their love for us, and who are so taken up with us, that they appear to live for no other object than that of doing us every kind of service?

4. After we are born, the mother for many months feeds us with the substance of her own body, watches over us by night and by day, loses her own rest to take care of us, and is in continual care and solicitude about us. She uses every expedient to preserve us from harm. She adopts every precaution, by clothing and other means, to shelter us from the inclemency of the seasons, and nothing is left undone to secure us from the least symptom of disease. On the part of the father, what cares and attention for his children! He labours and toils every day for their support. He undergoes sufferings and annoyances to settle them well in the world. He makes many sacrifices, that they may be properly educated. His efforts are unceasing in procuring for them respectability and rank. Ah! dear children, can you ever sufficiently make a return of love to your fathers and mothers, who have loved and do love you so tenderly and constantly? Can there be anything more just than that you should give them, on every occasion, proofs of this filial love?

5. Besides, our parents even represent God Himself to us. God is our Creator, from whom we have received our being. God is our constant Protector, by whom we are preserved from all evils. God is our bountiful Provider, from whom we derive all that we have, and on that account we are bound to love Him. But as in all these characters our parents represent God in our regard, we should love them next after God. Our love for our parents ought, then, to be affectionate and *sincere*, and from our hearts we should wish them well. This love we should manifest both by words and actions—praying for them—doing them every service that we can—rejoicing in their prosperity—afflicted at their reverses and ill fortune—consoling them in their trials and sorrows—and studying in every way to make their lives happy and contented, by our dutiful and affectionate behaviour towards them.

6. When we have a *sincere* love for one, his company is always agreeable to us. So, too, if we really and sincerely love our parents, we will feel it a pleasure to remain with them at home, and to enjoy their society; we shall always speak to them in pleasing accents, and never be bitter or morose in our conversation with them. Studiously avoid whatever may be displeasing to them; anticipate their wishes, and willingly and readily render them every service in your power. Do you act thus, dear children, towards your parents? Can you say that you love sincerely from your hearts your father and your mother? If you love them not in this manner, you are ill-natured children, and you deserve not to be loved by God.

7. In the second place, a child is obliged to show respect for his father and mother. "Honour thy father in work and word, and all patience," says the Lord. (Ecclus. iii. 9.) A child, then, should have inwardly in his heart a great esteem and reverential fear of his parents, and by no means despise and contemn them,

whatever weaknesses or infirmities he may observe in them: "Honour thy father in thy whole heart, and be not unmindful of the sighs of thy mother." (Ecclus. vii.) We should therefore honour and respect our parents in our words and in all our outward behaviour—paying them all deference on every occasion—speaking to them with respect—showing a regard to what they say, and yielding to their opinions. Hence, to call one's parents bad names, to reproach them, to upbraid them for their defects, to mock them or deride them, is a very grievous sin. Children ought to govern their hearts, words, and actions, by the duty they owe their parents, and not by their parents' folly. They must overlook their faults, and observe the image of God in them, who has made them the authors and instruments of the very life they have. With all their faults they are your parents; with all their faults you are still their children, and as such you owe them all honour and respect.

8. A child who really respects his parents, studiously avoids every action or word which may in any way appear as conveying a slight of them. He takes particular care not to render them ridiculous by laughing or sneering at their acts or expressions, but on all occasions he overlooks their peculiarities, and testifies towards them, notwithstanding their defects, respect and reverence. His bearing towards his parents is respectful, and he willingly submits to their correction, listens to their advice. He never blushes to recognize them in public, however poor they may be, and however mean be their attire. Joseph, the Patriarch's son, as we read in the book of Genesis, though raised to the dignity of viceroy of all Egypt, had no sooner heard his father was coming to him, but he mounted his chariot and went to meet him, and when he saw him, he cast himself upon his knees and mixed his embraces with his tears. His high dignity had not raised him above his duty, nor the meanness of his father's condition in the least

lessened his respect. The like respectful behaviour we find in Solomon, the wisest of men, who, as we read in the third book of Kings, when his mother came, rose from his throne to meet her. He placed her on a royal throne, and she sat on his right hand.

9. In the third place, children owe *obedience* to their parents. Parents here below hold the place of God in regard to children; and when our parents command us to do anything, we should consider that it is God Himself who speaks and commands through them: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just." (Eph. vi. 1.) And in his epistle to the Colossians, the Apostle repeats the injunction: "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord." (Col. iii. 20.) Our Lord not only commands us to obey our parents, but He gives us in His own person an example of that obedience; for we read in the Gospel, that under the humble roof at Nazareth Jesus was obedient to His parents, Mary and Joseph: "and He was subject to them." (Luke, ii. 51.)

10. Now, this duty of *obedience* to parents consists in three things: (1.) In the *obedience* itself, by which children exactly perform what their parents command them, and strictly avoid what they forbid. So long as children are under their parents' control, and in their family, they are obliged to obey their parents in all things which are not contrary to the law of God. This St. Paul expressly declares, as we have seen above: "Children, obey your parents in all things"—"Children, obey your parents in the Lord;" and this should particularly take place in all family concerns, which are entirely subject to the parents' management and authority. And as parents have the charge of their children's souls intrusted to them by Almighty God, and have authority over them for this purpose, of course they have a right to command the children in what regards their own behaviour, the company they keep, the books they read, the recreations

they take, and the amusements they take a part in. So that whatever orders or prohibitions parents give with regard to these things, the children are obliged in conscience to obey them.

11. (2.) In the *manner* of their obedience. The obedience of children to their parents should be cheerful, ready, and agreeable, without excuses, without delay or putting off, without murmuring or stubbornness, without giving harsh words or making opposition; for all such delays, and murmurings, and disagreeableness, are displeasing to the parents, tend to anger them, and are contrary to the respect the children owe them. You should, dear children, be very particular in obeying your parents, and that obedience should be most willing. When they command you to do anything which relates to the glory of God, and to the sanctification of your souls—when they order you, for example, to assist at catechism, at evening prayers, or other devotions held in the Church, to go to confession, to remain away from *wakes*, dancing-houses, spirit-shops, to avoid wicked companions, and never to be seen playing with them; your duty is at once to submit cheerfully to their commands, and obey them as you would God. Do you act thus?

12. (3.) The duty of obedience to parents requires, in the third place, that children should receive with patience and submission any reproof and correction that parents may think necessary to give them. They should, like the prodigal son, humbly acknowledge their fault, ask pardon for the offence, and promise amendment for the future. "He that loveth correction," says the wise man, "loveth knowledge; but he that hateth reproof is foolish" (Prov. xii. 1.) Now, if this be true, even when corrected by any friend, out of charity, how much more when corrected by one's parents, who has full authority and a just right to do so!

13. Nothing shows more clearly how agreeable this

obedience of children is before Almighty God—even when the things commanded them by their parents are in themselves indifferent—than what we read in the Prophecy of Jeremias. The Prophet tells us that "pots full of wine, and cups, were set before the Rechabites, and they were told to drink the wine; but they would not drink it, because they were commanded not to drink wine by Jonadab their father." And this obedience was so agreeable to God, that the Prophet continues thus to that family: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Because you have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and have kept all his precepts, and have done all that he commanded you; therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, there shall not be wanting a man of the race of Jonadab the son of Rechab standing before me for ever." (Jer. xxxv. 18.)

Q. Is there any other duty required by the fourth Commandment from children to parents?

A. Yes; they should assist their parents in their spiritual and temporal necessities.

14. Children are, indeed, obliged to assist their parents in their old age, and when they are poor, and sick, and require the aid of others. For if it be a duty incumbent on all persons to assist their indigent neighbours, how much more pressing is the duty of a child towards his parents! If your parents be poor, recollect that they are the persons who nourished you in your young days, and rejoice to know that you can assist them in their old age, and make them a return for their past care of and attention to you, by holding out to them a willing and helping hand. If you are poor yourself, even then divide with your parents the miserable pittance that you gain by the sweat of your brow. If sickness come upon them, redouble your care and attention towards them, bearing in mind with what

tenderness and assiduity they ministered to your wants in your tender years. Be constant in your attendance at their bed of sickness, and endeavour to alleviate their sufferings by words full of tenderness and consolation.

15. Are your parents in sorrow and affliction, soothe them with kind words, support them under their grief by attention and kindness to them, and seek to dry up their tears by mingling your own with them. If your parents have become old and infirm, recollect that they had been at one time the stay and support of your early years, and let you now, in turn, be their prop and support. Aid them in every way you can, and supply them with the necessaries and, if it be in your power, the comforts which old age requires.

16. "Honour thy father and mother," says St. Ambrose, "and when they want, provide for them that have provided for you. Assist thy father and feed thy mother, and when thou hast done this, thou hast not satisfied for half that she has done for thee. Feed thy mother, and when thou hast done this, thou hast made no return for the sorrow and pains she endured for thee; when thou hast done this, thou makest a small recompense for the many days she fed thee at her breast, for the many days thou hast made her fast. Feed thy mother, and when thou hast done this, thou hast made no return for the bitter medicines she has taken, disagreeable to her inclination, when she thought them proper for thee. Consider the nights she has watched, and the hours she has wept, when thou wert ill; and canst thou see her want?" If, dear children, you neglect your parents in their old age, and when they are in want and affliction, what judgment do you expect from God? If you see those want from whom you had your life and being, how will you be able to answer for it before the Author of all life? If the rich man, mentioned in the Gospel, deserved hell-fire because he was insensible to the wants of poor Lazarus, who was only a

stranger to him, how much more grievous is that crime, and how much more deserving of punishment is the neglect of parents by their children?

17. Not only in their temporal wants should children assist their parents, but also in their spiritual necessities. If a child knows his parents to be subject to any evil custom, such as drunkenness, impurity, stealing, neglect of religious duties, they should remonstrate with them, with all possible respect, if they know their temper will bear it, and exhort them mildly to abandon their evil ways, and return to God. Or if this be not likely to succeed, they may advise with some person, whose prudence and authority may carry more weight and prove more effectual. When parents are dangerously sick, and are in danger of death, children should make every exertion to provide for the good of their parents' souls. In their last distress, and when eternity is at stake, they are incapable of helping themselves; and, therefore, at that awful moment, more than ever, they require the assistance of their children.

18. Care should, then, be taken that parents be provided with all things necessary for a happy departure out of this life, and that the sacraments of penance, the blessed eucharist, and extreme unction be administered to them by the priest of the Church. Then, after that, children should pray for them, read for them good books, and often put them in mind of the mercies of God and the happiness of the world to come. And when their souls have quitted this world they should not be forgotten, but prayers should be offered up for their repose, and on every anniversary of their death they should be remembered by their surviving children. Particular care should be taken that the last wills and dying requests of parents should be faithfully complied with. If, dear children, these pious duties be discharged, you have every reason to expect the reward that God has promised to those who honour their parents, which is,

that they shall, even in this life, enjoy happiness, and that their days shall be long in the land.

Q. Are we obliged by the fourth Commandment to honour others besides our parents?

A. Yes; we are obliged by the fourth Commandment to honour our superiors, both spiritual and temporal.

19. The fourth Commandment, which obliges us to love and honour our parents, and to obey them in everything which is not opposed to the law of God, obliges us also to pay honour, respect, and obedience to our *superiors*. By *superiors* are meant bishops and priests, kings, princes, and magistrates, tutors, guardians, and masters, teachers, aged persons, and the like; all of whom are entitled, some in a greater, some in a less degree, to share our love, our obedience, and our respect. Bishops and pastors are generally called fathers, because through them we have received the life of grace, and have been adopted amongst the children of God. Of bishops and other pastors St. Paul says: "Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of a double honour, especially those who labour in word and doctrine." (1 Tim. v. 17.) The Apostle also teaches that they are entitled to obedience from us: "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them, for they watch as being to render an account of your souls." (Heb. xiii. 17.) If we be wanting in respect and obedience to our *superiors*, particularly bishops and priests, we violate the fourth Commandment, and are guilty in the sight of God. The duties that we owe masters, princes, and magistrates, we shall consider in a subsequent question.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

JOSEPH'S LOVE AND RESPECT FOR HIS FATHER JACOB.

The conduct of Joseph towards his father Jacob is a touching example of the manner in which children should respect and love their parents, and of the gratitude and submission which they owe them at all times. When a child, he respected and loved his father tenderly. When, later in life, he was raised by Pharaoh to the proud dignity of viceroy over all Egypt, he forgot not his father, but when alone with his brothers, and making himself known to them, his first inquiry was about his father. I am Joseph, your brother, said he: is my father yet living? Go, hasten to him, and tell him that his son Joseph not only lives, but has all the land of Egypt at his disposal. Go, bring him, be quick, make no delay. And when Joseph was apprized of his father's coming, he set off with a becoming retinue to meet him, and proceeded as far as Gessen. And the moment his father's carriage came in sight, Joseph got out of his chariot and respectfully advanced on foot to receive him. As soon as they met, they rushed into each other's arms, they cordially embraced, they clung for some time together without being able to utter a single word. The excess of their joy was too high for either of them to speak what they felt. They wept, and their tears best witnessed the glowing sentiments of their hearts in this unexpected interview. Joseph then conducted both his father and brothers into the royal city, and, far from being ashamed of his father, he presented him to King Pharaoh, and ever afterwards treated him with the greatest respect, love, and tenderness. And when the old man became sick, and was approaching his last end, Joseph, with his two sons, set out at once to pay his last duty to his dying father. He remained by his bed until he breathed his last, and then, closing the old man's eyes, he threw himself upon the face of his deceased father, and poured out a torrent of tears. Then he gave orders to the physicians to embalm the body; and when the seventy days that Egypt mourned for him was expired, Joseph made preparations for his father's funeral, and accompanied his remains to their final resting-place, the land of Chanaan, and thus fulfilled his father's request.—*Genesis.*

THE LOVE OF SONS FOR THEIR OLD MOTHER.

A poor widow, who had been deprived of the use of her limbs, felt the most lively regret at not being able to go to Mass on Sundays. When Sunday came round, she invariably said to her sons: "What a happiness would it be to me if I could go to church and hear

Mass! but I cannot go, for I am old, infirm, and the road is long;" and as she said these words, the poor woman shed tears and fetched a deep sigh; then she raised to her lips the cross of her beads, which she was telling with the greatest piety and recollection. Her two sons, who entertained a filial affection towards their old parent, soon contrived to satisfy their mother's pious longings. They attached to her old arm-chair two poles, and by this means they carried the poor woman to church. As they entered, for the first time, the road to the church, carrying the old mother in her chair, the people on the road loaded them with their blessings, and even cast flowers on their path. The pastor of the place, hearing of this loving invention of filial love, ascended the pulpit, and took for his text these words of Deuteronomy: "Honour thy father and mother, as the Lord thy God had commanded thee." His discourse was full of unction, and produced a thrilling effect upon the congregation. He compared the flowers cast on the path of the two sons, when bearing their mother to church, to the benedictions which God would soon shower down on them.

SIR THOMAS MORE'S RESPECT FOR HIS PARENTS.

Stapleton tells us, that Sir Thomas More (who was Chancellor of England, and who died on account of his firmness in supporting the Catholic religion) entertained such high respect for his parents, that he never left his house, even in the days of his power and great influence, without having first demanded, on his knees, the blessing of his aged father.

GUSTAVUS III. AND THE PEASANT GIRL'S LOVE FOR HER MOTHER.

As Gustavus III., King of Sweden, was one day passing through a village, he noticed a young girl drawing water from a well. Gustavus walked up to her and asked a drink. She immediately gave it to him. "Amiable girl," said the king to her, "if you wish to accompany me to Stockholm, I will procure you a more suitable occupation." "However desirous I may be to better my condition," answered the girl, "I could not for a moment entertain your proposal. My mother is poor, infirm, and old, and as there is none to assist and support her but myself, I could not think of leaving her." "Where is your mother?" "In this cabin," replied the daughter. The king entered the miserable habitation, and beheld a poor, feeble old woman stretched on a wretched pallet. Moved at what he saw, the prince said to her: "Poor woman! you are to be pitied

very much." "I would be a much greater object of pity," replied the old woman, "were it not for this good, kind, and generous girl, who, by her attention and care, seeks to prolong my days. May God bless her and reward her!" she added, and then shed tears. "Continue to be thus kind to your mother," said Gustavus to the young girl, presenting her, at the same time, with a purse, "and I will, in a short time, obtain for you something more. Adieu, dear child; I am your king." On his return to Stockholm the monarch conferred on the mother a pension for life, and after her death it was to revert to the daughter.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What duties are required of us by the fourth Commandment?
2. Are we strictly obliged to love our parents?
3. What are the obligations under which we lie to our parents?
4. What have our fathers and mothers undergone for us?
5. Are we obliged to love our parents through any other motives?
6. In what way should we manifest our love towards our parents?
7. In what manner should a child respect his parents?
8. Give one or two examples of the respect to be shown by children to parents?
9. What is the third duty of parents to children?
10. Why are children obliged to obey their parents?
11. In what manner should a child obey his parents?
12. Should children bear patiently the correction given them by their parents?
13. Is the obedience of children to parents pleasing to God?
14. Should children assist their parents when they are old and poor?
15. Should children assist their parents when they are in affliction and sorrow?
16. What are the observations of St. Ambrose on assisting parents?
17. Should children assist their parents in their spiritual necessities?
18. What should be the duty of children to parents before and after death?
19. Are we obliged by the fourth Commandment to honour others besides our parents?

PRACTICE.

1. Always entertain for your parents sentiments of love and affection, and manifest that love by your kind bearing towards them.

2. Obey the commands of your parents willingly, and perform what they require from you with pleasure.

3. When your father and mother are in want, cheerfully give them food and raiment, and be not ashamed to acknowledge them as your parents.

PRAYER.

O heavenly Father! common Father of fathers and children! we have now been taught the great obligations under which we lie, of respecting, loving, and obeying our parents. We give Thee thanks for the interesting and useful instruction that we have just received. Pardon us, dear Lord, for having hitherto honoured so little those whom you command us to honour under the severest penalties. We now, at your feet, form the resolution of evermore honouring and loving our parents, and we promise sincerely never again to offend them by act or word, but ever to be docile, obedient, and submissive children, so that we may deserve to obtain from Thee a long and happy life here, and eternal blessings hereafter in heaven. Amen.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON SINS AGAINST THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Q. What is forbidden by the fourth Commandment?

A. All contempt, stubbornness, ill-will, and disobedience to parents and superiors.

1. We have already seen, dear children, that we are strictly bound to honour and respect our parents, and to

entertain for them esteem and reverence. "All contempt" of them or despising them is, therefore, a great violation of the "fourth Commandment," and very sinful in the sight of God. Whatever weaknesses or infirmities we may observe in our parents, can never authorize us to *contemn* them, but should rather claim our sympathy and compassion. "Hearken to the father that begot thee," says the wise man, "and despise not thy mother when she is old." (Prov. xxiii. 22.) As it is the duty of a child to honour his father by *words* and *works*, it is, therefore, a sin "forbidden by the fourth Commandment" to answer parents in a tone of resentment, or in a loud, disrespectful tone of voice. It is a greater sin to mock them, to contradict them disrespectfully, to utter imprecations against them, to insult them, to reproach them, to upbraid them for their defects, or deride them, to call them bad names, such as *fools, beasts, robbers, drunkards, wretches, villains, miscreants.* Opprobrious names of this kind, when uttered in their presence, are generally mortal sins.

2. In the Old Law, they who treated *contemptuously* their father and mother were condemned to death: "He that curseth his father or mother shall die the death." (Exod. xxi. 17.) And the wise man says: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth the labour of his mother in bearing of him, let the ravens of the brooks pick it out, and the young eagles eat it." (Prov. xxx. 17.) By the ravens and eagles here mentioned, should be understood the infernal spirits; for our Saviour also represents by the birds of the air those infernal spirits, who take the word out of the heart of those who receive it, as we read in St. Matthew. Christ assures us, that "he that saith to his brother, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire." (Matt. v. 22.) And if so, what should he expect who speaks to his parents in *contemptuous* language?

3. Cursing one's father or mother is, too, a very

grievous transgression of "the fourth Commandment," and a "contempt" of parents, which all persons hold in the greatest abhorrence, and which will be severely punished by Almighty God: "He that curseth his father and mother shall die the death." (Exod. xxi. 17.) And we read in the book of Proverbs, that the child who arrives at such a pitch of infamy as to dare to curse his father or mother, shall lose his *light in the midst of darkness*, that is, that his reputation and everything that he holds most dear shall be blasted. But the most crying sin of all, and the worst species of "contempt" of parents, is that of raising the hand against them, and threatening to strike them. The son or daughter who is so lost to every feeling of nature as to attempt to lay hands on a parent, ought every day to fear the vengeance of God. If honouring father and mother will obtain for a child a long and happy life in this world, the child that maltreats a parent shall live but for a short time, and shall live in misery and wretchedness. It is told that a certain young man barbarously dragged his father by the feet. When they had reached a certain place, the father said: "My son, you have done enough; do not drag me any farther; for I once dragged my father thus far, and in punishment of my sin, God has justly permitted me to be thus dragged by you."

4. Children become also guilty of "contempt" of parents, whenever they expose the weaknesses or defects of their parents to others—when they speak of them and complain of them in such terms as to expose them to derision, and make them the butt of ridicule. They should remember that whatever faults their parents have, still they are their parents; and instead of making known those faults, they should conceal them, and preserve their parents from contempt: "Glory not in the dishonour of thy father, for his shame is no glory to thee." (Ecclus. iii. 12.) What was it that brought such heavy calamities on the posterity of Cham? Laughing

in derision at his father, and endeavouring to expose him to ridicule. You may, perhaps, say: "I have a father and a mother who cannot be borne, they are so unreasonable." But the Scriptures tell you that, notwithstanding the unreasonableness of parents, you must not *contemn* them: "And if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and *despise* him not when thou art in thy strength." (Ecclus. iii. 15.)

5. "Stubbornness," too, "is forbidden by the fourth Commandment;" and in the Old Law had been punished in a very signal manner; for in the book of Deuteronomy we read, that a stubborn and unruly child was to be stoned to death: "If a man have a *stubborn* and unruly son, who will not hear the commandments of his father and mother.... the people of the city shall stone him, and he shall die." (Deut. xxi. 18.) The parents even of a *stubborn* and unruly son were ordered by God to be his accusers, because by his *stubbornness* and disobedience he had lost the very being of a child. Children are then guilty of a sin against "the fourth Commandment," when they murmur at their parents' commands, and become *stubborn* and dogged when asked to do anything opposed to their own wishes, and so persist in not doing what they are commanded.

6. "Ill-will" against parents is also forbidden by the fourth Commandment. We have already seen that we are strictly bound to *love* our parents, to wish them well, to desire for them every good, and to study to promote their happiness here and hereafter. How unnatural, then, how inhuman must the conduct of those children be, who bear hatred to their parents—who entertain continually an aversion to them—who can scarcely speak to them a pleasing word! If the Scripture says, as we read in St. John, that "*whosoever* hateth his brother is a murderer," what must be said of *children* who bear hatred against their parents? *Ill-will* towards a father or mother is so hateful in the sight of God, that

children guilty of it should fear lest the anger of God should fall upon them, and that, in the words of Scripture, their "lamp should be put out in the midst of darkness."

7. "And disobedience to parents and superiors" is, in the last place, "*forbidden* by the fourth Commandment." In *disobeying* your parents in what they lawfully command, you transgress the ordinance of God. When parents command you to remain at home at night —not to keep company with vicious companions—not to frequent gaming-houses, dancing-parties, or *wakes*, and the like—and that you disobey them in these particulars, you transgress "the fourth Commandment," and therefore become guilty in the sight of God; for you cannot disobey the just and reasonable orders of your parents, without at the same time disobeying Him whose place in your regard your parents hold. And the offence is more or less grievous according as the thing prohibited is more or less important. Your *disobedience* to your parents' orders is still more criminal when you foresee that it will be to them a source of great anger and sorrow. And yet, alas! how many children there are who scarcely make any account of disobedience to their parents, and think it not even necessary to accuse themselves of such disobedience in the tribunal of penance!

8. Be particularly careful, dear children, against "disobedience to parents and superiors." Whatever orders or prohibitions your parents or superiors give you with regard to the places you frequent, the company you keep, the amusements you take, obey them at once. And let that obedience be cheerful and pleasing; without excusing yourselves, without delay or shifting, without murmuring or complaining, without giving harsh words or making opposition; for all this is very disagreeable to parents, tends to put them in anger, and is altogether "forbidden by the fourth Commandment."

Q. What special reward has God promised to dutiful children?

A. A long and happy life even in this world. (Ephes. vi.)

9. In the Old Law, God promised "a long and happy life" to children who should be submissive and respectful towards their parents. By this long life is to be understood the abundant favours which God showered down upon them. Hence, the young Tobias enjoyed the greatest prosperity because he had been the joy of his father and mother. In the New Law, a "long life" is also promised to children who honour their parents; the meaning of which is, that they may expect a great recompense—the blessings of heaven, which is the source of all the graces necessary for salvation and everlasting happiness hereafter. Temporal advantages, too, are meant by "a long life," for it generally happens that children who discharge faithfully the duties of filial piety are happy in this world. God blesses all their undertakings; they meet with the respect and esteem of all their acquaintances; they are beloved by their relatives, and they have the happiness of seeing their children growing up in the practice of those filial duties which they themselves had exercised towards their parents. "He," says the wise man, "who honours his father shall have joy in his own children." (Ecclus. iii. 6.)

10. It is certainly true that pious and dutiful children do not always live to see an old age, but often die in their youthful days; and, on the contrary, it happens sometimes that disobedient and undutiful children are permitted to live long. But we are not, therefore, to imagine that God is worse than His word, or that He breaks His promises when He takes pious and dutiful children to Himself in their innocence, before they leave the path of virtue, according to these words of the Scripture in the book of Wisdom, where the Holy Ghost,

speaking of the death of a virtuous youth, says: "He was taken away lest malice should change his understanding, and lest deceit should beguile his soul." (Wis. iv. 11.) Moreover, virtuous children are sometimes called out of life in a tender age, lest, involved in the public calamities and miseries of the times, their virtue should stagger and their salvation be in danger. And the great reason of all this is, because the goods of this world, of what nature soever they be, whether long life, health, wealth, or the like, are not really blessings to us, but inasmuch as they contribute to our salvation, our increase in virtue, and the improvement of our souls. And, therefore, it is the great mercy of God that removes them from us, or us from them, in the days of our innocence and virtue, when He foresees the ill use we shall make of them; for, in that case, to cut us off early in life is the greatest blessing He can bestow, because it brings us sooner and securer to our great end, the enjoyment of God Himself.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE PUNISHMENT OF CHOSROAS FOR CONTEMPT OF HIS FATHER.

Chosroas II. ascended the throne of his father after he himself had passed sentence of death upon him. But the same treatment which he inflicted on his father he himself was soon to receive. His eldest son seduced his body-guard, excited a rebellion in 625, made his father a prisoner, loaded him with chains, confined him in a dark, dismal dungeon of his palace, and, assisted by the courtiers, deprived him of his crown. Some time after he summoned his father to appear before him, and then bitterly inveighed against him for all the injustice and cruelties which he had committed, and concluded his invective in these words: "As, without any provocation, you have put your father to death, you cannot consider it a crime in me to act in the same manner towards you." After this he ordered him to be

led back to prison, allowed him for food only a little bread and water, and from time to time sent persons to visit him in his prison for the purpose of upbraiding and reproaching him. He put to death seven of his sons before his own eyes, and the father himself he caused to be transfixed with arrows. Such was the miserable end of the unhappy Chosroas, after having for five years experienced torments at the hands of his son. However, the malediction which had brought down on his head the murder of his father and his brothers, began to press heavier and heavier on the king and kingdom of Persia; famine and plague were the executors of the vengeance of God. The cruel and sanguinary prince, regarded by the nation as the author of the calamities and scourges by which it was struck, became an object of horror and malediction to the people. The prince, seeing himself so detested and abhorred, fell into a state of sadness and gloom, then was attacked with the prevailing epidemic, and died miserably six months after his having perpetrated his crime of parricide. Some think that he perished by the sword of an assassin.

ABSALOM'S ILL-WILL AND DISOBEDIENCE AGAINST HIS FATHER DAVID.

Absalom, forgetful of his father's goodness towards him, erected the standard of rebellion against him, forced him to fly from his own city of Jerusalem, and followed him with a powerful army in order to wrest from him the crown. David, seeing that he was pressed close by his ill-natured son, was obliged to stand and offer him resistance. He called together the few faithful friends he had about him, and prepared to give his son battle. His innate courage prompted him to lead them on in person, but his officers, who knew how much depended on his life, would not suffer him to expose it on the field. He yielded to their reason, and gave the command to Joab, with the strictest orders to preserve the life of Absalom. Absalom had taken the field with an army much superior in numbers to that of David. The two armies came to an engagement in the forest of Ephraim. The rebels were defeated with great carnage. Twenty thousand of them remained dead on the spot; the rest, with Absalom, endeavoured to save themselves by flight. The ungrateful son, Absalom, was remarkable for a long flowing head of hair, and being hurried away by the confusion he was then in, rode under a thick spreading oak to avoid his pursuers. His hair became entangled in the boughs, and his mule going on, left him hanging in the air. Some of David's army soon rode up and saw the position of Absalom, but, in accordance with the king's order, no one dared to lift his arm

against him. Joab was informed of the situation of Absalom, and he hastened to the spot, and when he arrived he took three lances in his hand, and struck them all into the heart of the unhappy and rebellious son, Absalom. Thus miserably perished the disobedient son of a kind father.

THE DISOBEDIENT SON.

Theophilus Rainaud relates, that on the borders of France and Savoy there was a young nobleman who was disobedient to his widowed mother. She commanded him to be at home at an early hour in the evening, and not to remain out till midnight, as was his habit. He continued to disobey her commands. She one night ordered the doors to be locked. Finding them closed against him, he cried out in a loud voice but was not heard. He then broke out into injurious language and maledictions against his mother, and, along with his brother and a servant who were with him, he took shelter in a neighbouring house. After having gone to rest, they heard a frightful noise, and saw a hideous looking person entering that part of the room in which the young man lay. This frightful looking person took the young man by the feet and stretched him on the table, and cut him to pieces with a sabre, and then gave him to be devoured by four horrible dogs. The brother and servant afterwards made search for his body, but could not find it. The brother was so terrified at the awful death of this young man, that he became a Carthusian, and after a holy life, died a holy death.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Is contempt of parents a great violation of the fourth Commandment?
2. What is said in the Scriptures of those who contemn and mock their parents?
3. What do you say of those children who curse and strike their parents?
4. Is it sinful for children to speak of the faults and failings of their parents?
5. How do you prove that stubbornness to parents is hateful to God?
6. Is ill-will against parents very sinful in the sight of God?
7. Why is disobedience to parents very sinful?
8. Should we obey our parents readily and cheerfully?

9. What is meant by the long life promised to dutiful children?
10. Why is it that dutiful children are sometimes cut off early in life?

PRACTICE.

1. Be careful in never showing disrespect to your parents either by word or action.
2. When your parents command you to perform anything, let it be done by you cheerfully and at once.
3. Always recollect that children who are disobedient and disrespectful to their parents are detested by God.

PRAYER.

O dear Lord! we have now learned what a grievous and crying sin it is to mock, or in any way to insult our parents. We have seen the frightful chastisements that have been threatened by Thee against all those children who disrespect and ridicule their parents. We confess O Lord! that we have often, by our contempt of father and mother, deserved very severe punishment, but we now promise Thee, that from this day forward we shall ever be submissive to our parents, and shall cheerfully and readily perform what they require of us, that we may inherit the promise made by Thee to dutiful children. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON THE DUTIES OF PARENTS TO CHILDREN.

Q. What are the chief duties of parents?

A. To provide for their children, to instruct them and all others under their care in the Christian doctrine, and by every means in their power to lead them to God. (1 Tim. v. 8.)

1. The first duty of parents is "to provide" for their children." Nature itself declares to parents this duty of *providing* for their children necessary food and raiment. The serpents, lions, and wolves, as St. Augustin says, love to *provide* for their young ones, by an impulse of nature. They feed and rear them until they are able to provide for themselves. The timid hen has such a love for her young brood, that sooner than allow the hawk to take them off, she will fight until death in defending them. But can Christian parents be so unnatural and so much below the brute creation, as to refuse them the food and clothing which are necessary for them? Can they be so hard-hearted, so unjust, and so inhuman, as to leave their children perishing with hunger at home, whilst they themselves are squandering their earnings in drinking and gambling abroad? Parents, then, are bound to *provide* for the wants of their children—to provide for them food and clothing, which are essential to the preservation of their lives.

2. The love which parents owe their children requires also of them that they *provide* what is necessary for their souls. Parents are to their children what shepherds are to their flocks, that is, their guides and guardians. As shepherds are bound to provide for their flocks, and to defend them from injury, so parents are obliged "to provide for their children" whatever is necessary for the good of their souls. Their chief concern should then be to fit their children for heaven more than for this world; and for that purpose, parents should instruct their children in their earliest years on the manner in which they should pray. They should then "instruct them in the Christian doctrine," that the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His teaching may grow up with them.

3. "To instruct children in the Christian doctrine" is a most necessary duty of parents. The eternal happiness of children depends in a manner wholly on the

care which parents take of them, and the *instructions* which they give them. Children come into this world under the greatest disadvantages as to their future welfare. Ignorant of the great truths that conduct to eternal happiness—violently prone to everything that leads to eternal misery—surrounded on every side with numberless enemies and dangers—if left to themselves they must inevitably perish. Just like the earth of which we are formed; if left without being properly cultivated, we can produce nothing but weeds, and tares, and noxious fruit. But as the earth, if properly tilled, may be highly improved and made to bring forth the richest and most salutary productions; in like manner, if the minds of children, by proper care and attention, be imbued early with the fear of God, and instructed betimes "in the Christian doctrine"—if the seeds of virtue be sown in their youthful minds, they will grow up in the love of God, and in after time will bring forth fruits of virtue and sanctity.

4. It is when we are in our tender years that good impressions can be properly made in our minds. Our souls are then like a sheet of clean paper, fit to receive any impressions either of good or evil—like a piece of soft wax, they may be moulded into any form that one pleases. According to the form we take when young, our future conduct will be: "A young man according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs, xxii. 6.) It is then clear and manifest, that the eternal salvation of children depends almost entirely upon their being brought up in virtue early in life, made acquainted with the leading truths of eternity, and *instructed* in their young days "in the Christian doctrine."

5. But to whom does it belong to train them up in this way, and give them a knowledge of "the Christian doctrine"? Most certainly to their parents before all others. Children are given to parents merely as a

trust by Almighty God, to whom they belong. God has implanted in the hearts of children a natural love and affection for their parents, which love gives them great authority and influence over them, and makes it easy for them to form them in any way they please. Hence it is, that whatever they say makes a deep impression upon their children; whatever they approve the children esteem, and whatever they condemn the children judge to be evil. From all this it follows, that it is entirely in the parents' power to make of their children what they please, and this is confirmed by many examples from Scripture. Why was Susanna "a very beautiful woman, and one that feared God"? Because "her parents being just," says the Scripture, "had instructed their daughter according to the law of Moses." (Dan. xiii. 23.) Tobias was a holy man, and "lived ninety-nine years in the fear of the Lord with joy," for his father "from his infancy taught him to fear God, and to abstain from all sin." (Tob. i. 10.)

6. Parents should, then, commence *instructing* their children as soon as they are capable of knowing anything. They should teach them in their infancy to pronounce the sacred names of God and Jesus Christ with great reverence, never speaking of God or Jesus Christ in the presence of their children without an air of respect and solemnity, that the children may always hold these sacred names in the greatest veneration. In like manner, when they speak of anything virtuous and good in presence of their children, they should always speak of it with great esteem and approbation, that their little minds may be impressed with a high opinion of what is good and just. When they speak of anything bad and sinful, they should always express their horror and detestation of it; for when children hear their parents speak of sin in such a way, they naturally conceive that sin must be something very dreadful, and, therefore, they will take care to avoid it.

7. When children are a little older, and understand things better, parents should instruct them in the knowledge of the God who made them—of His great power and wisdom—of His being present everywhere, so that nothing can be hid from His all-seeing eye—of the great obligation under which children are of serving that great God—and of the great punishment prepared for those who do not love and serve Him. "All the days of thy life," said Tobias to his son, when he had grown up from being a child, "have God in thy mind, and take heed thou never consent to sin, nor transgress the commands of the Lord thy God." (Tob. iv. 6.) Parents should also teach their children that there are Three Persons in one God, and that Jesus Christ, God the Son, the Second Person, became man, and died on a cross for our sins. As children advance in years, parents should be careful to continue their instructions, until they are taught "the Christian doctrine," that is, what they should believe and know in order to save their souls. If parents of themselves are incapable to do this, they should, at least, take care that their children, and also "all others under their care," should attend public instructions on the Christian doctrine, given on Sundays and holidays, by their priests or others appointed by them.

8. "And by every means in their power" parents should "lead their children to God." To the good instruction and advice which parents give their children, they must also join a proper *vigilance* and attention over them. They should see that they actually do what they are told ought to be done. This should in particular be observed with regard to their prayers, getting their catechism, attending the Christian doctrine, and spending the Sundays and holidays well. Requiring children to perform exercises of piety in our presence, will be *leading them*, as it were, by the hand to God. Parental *vigilance* requires also from parents, that they should take care that their

children be not exposed to any danger of learning evil. Parents must then take particular care to prevent their children from frequenting those places and persons that may prove dangerous to their faith and morals. This is of the greatest consequence, because, being naturally more inclined to learn evil than good, if children be exposed to hear and see what is bad and wicked, this will have more effect to teach them ill, than all their parents can do to teach them good.

9. For this reason, parents should be very particular as to the character of the servants they employ about their children. They should never allow any servant to speak immodest words in presence of their children without a very severe reprehension. Many a poor child has been ruined by servants, who, by their unchristian conduct, have both taught and encouraged children to wickedness. They must also be very watchful as to the company their children keep, and on no account to allow them to amuse themselves with those persons who are wicked and immoral, for "evil communications corrupt good morals." (1 Cor. xv. 33.) They should also take care that they read no bad or dangerous books; that they take no part in those diversions where their innocence may be exposed; for by reading bad books, and taking part in sinful plays, many a poor soul is led on to eternal perdition.

Q. Is there any other duty to be performed by parents towards their children, besides those of providing for them, and instructing them in the Christian doctrine?

A. Yes; parents should correct, admonish, and give good example to their children.

10. Parents are bound not only to provide for, instruct, and watch over their children, but also to admonish, *correct*, and give them good example. God has instituted matrimony that, aided by the direction and instruction of their parents, children may serve God and be saved. If they had no one to admonish them of their

duty, or to correct and chastise them for their faults, they would not renounce vice, and would be abandoned; for *watching* over children, and *instructing* them, would be to little purpose, if parents did not correct their faults, and endeavour to root out the growing evil. Of what avail would it be if a gardener should visit his garden daily, and observe all the weeds springing up in it, if he let them grow on, and took no pains to root them out? Now, the amending what is amiss, and checking bad inclinations in children, can only be done by correction; and, therefore, it is most important that parents should know the proper means of doing so.

11. In correcting children great prudence is required, and the easiest means are first to be employed. When children are guilty of disobedience or any other fault, parents should speak gently but firmly to them on the evil they have done, then address them against a similar transgression, threatening them with punishment if they dare repeat the fault. *Admonishing* them in this way, calmly but firmly, letting them see that their own interest is what you have in view in speaking to them, will make an impression on children, and will often produce a better effect than stripes or any other corporal punishment. When children will be made to feel that their parents are as firm and resolute as they are good and indulgent, they will at once bend to their authority, and respect their orders.

12. Parents should never correct their children while they themselves are in a passion. And yet, parents seldom correct their children except when they themselves are in a state of excitement, or in a passion. When children commit a fault, parents at once lose all patience with them, fly into a fury, curse, and threaten, and abuse them in the most scurrilous language. But is this *correction?* No; it is anger, it is passion, it is glutting their own revenge, but it is not correction. It is not intended for the children's good—and the

children know that—but just to satisfy their own rage, for the vexation the children give them. This manner of proceeding will never amend children, but will only make them worse than they have been; because it has more the appearance of hatred towards children than love. When children see that the parent's treatment of them proceeds from passion and anger, rather than from a desire of promoting their own good, it will make them more obstinate, will sour their tempers, and make them lose all respect and affection for their parents. When it is necessary to correct their children for any fault, parents should first endeavour to compose their minds, that their correction may be an act of reason and duty, and not a burst of passion. At least they should take care that the children should not perceive any sign of anger, or think that passion alone was the cause of the correction.

13. If *admonition* or *correction* be not sufficient to make children regret their faults and to promise amendment, parents must have recourse to corporal chastisements, such as applying the rod or scourge, obliging them to fast for a certain time, or confining them for some hours within doors. We find corporal chastisement frequently recommended, and even commanded, in the sacred Scriptures, and the great advantages that flow from it mentioned therein. "He that spareth the rod hateth his son," says the book of Proverbs; "but he that loveth him correcteth him betimes." (Prov. xxii. 15.) And in the same book we read: "Withhold not correction from a child; for if thou strike him well with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell." (Prov. xxiii. 13.)

14. That Almighty God strictly requires from parents this duty of chastising their children, we learn from the punishment which He inflicted on Heli, the high priest, for his neglect of that duty. Heli was

old and infirm, and his two sons officiated in his place as priests in the temple. But these sons were wicked, and greatly scandalized the people. And when the father heard of their evil doings, he called them and dismissed them with a gentle reprimand, when he should have severely punished them. For this neglect in chastising his children, God denounced the most severe punishments on him and his family. He declared "that his posterity should be rejected from the priesthood and reduced to poverty; that there should be no old man among his posterity, and that his two wicked sons should die a violent death in one day." (1 Kings, ii. 29.) And all this was soon accomplished. The two sons of Heli—Ophni and Phineas—were killed on the same day in battle, and their father, on hearing the sad news of the engagement, fell backwards from his seat, broke his neck, and died upon the spot.

15. Parents generally allege, as an excuse for neglecting to chastise their children, that "they cannot bear to hear them cry, or to see them afflicted." But it is great folly in parents to yield to this natural weakness, because, in neglecting to chastise their children, they lay the foundation of great misery, and of anguish and affliction to both children and themselves. If children be not punished for their faults, they will follow their own ways, and in course of time bring shame and disgrace on themselves, and sorrow and distress on their too indulgent parents. Heli, like such parents, would not correct his sons for fear of displeasing them; but the consequence was, that misfortune, unhappiness, and misery were the portion of him and his posterity.

16. But a parent must chastise his children with discretion, not in a fury, as some fathers and mothers do; for such chastisement produces no fruit, but rather makes children more wicked. Let children be punished, but let it be with the tenderness of a parent, and not

with the harshness and severity of a slave-driver. Let them be punished, but with discretion, and not with imprecations and offensive language. For disobedient and unruly children, it will be punishment sufficient to confine them in a room, to diminish their food, to deprive them of their customary amusements, and, sometimes, if necessary, to use a scourge or whip in chastising them, but not a stick. The great rule for a parent should be, not to lay hands on his children as long as he is in a passion. He should first allow his anger to cool, and then calmly inflict chastisement. Parents should also take care that the punishment which they inflict on children should be in proportion to the fault. There are many faults to which children are subject, but being rather mean and low than malicious, it will be sufficient to shame them out of them. But disobedience to parents, and telling lies in order to excuse and conceal their faults, should never be passed over without correction and punishment. Disobedience to parents should never be suffered, even in small matters; and if a system of lying, even in trifles, be overlooked in children, they will soon acquire a habit of telling lies in matters of the most serious nature.

17. *Good example* to children by parents is strictly enjoined by God. Indeed, instruction, admonition, and correction will be of little avail if not supported by good example. Parents may exhort children to be mild and gentle, not to be stubborn or passionate; but to what purpose will this admonition be, if parents themselves be of a violent temper, cross, morose, severe, and continually flying into a passion with their children? See how the children are placed. They hear their parents telling them one thing, and at the same time they see them acting in a manner quite contrary to what they say. Will not such inconsistent conduct of parents destroy the force of all their instructions and admonitions? Of what effect will it be to tell chil-

dren not to swear, not to curse, not to be telling lies, not to be speaking immodest words, if children hear this very diabolical language uttered by their parents? To what good will it tend to speak to your children about being regular and attentive at their prayers, attending Mass on Sundays, going to confession at stated times, if you, their parents, be negligent in the performance of these great duties? Vain will it be for parents to correct the vices of their children, to endeavour to instil any virtue into their minds, or to induce them to the practice of any duty, unless they first set them an example of what they require.

18. Children have the faculty of reasoning, although they cannot or will not reason justly; and when they see their parents—to whom they are accustomed to look up as persons far beyond themselves in wisdom and years—doing those very things which they say should not be done, they will be more inclined to follow their example than their instructions, naturally thinking that if these things were unlawful, their parents themselves would not be guilty of them, and that therefore they may do them too; and thus, forgetting the instructions, they will adhere to the example, to the eternal ruin, perhaps, of their own souls. How necessary, then, is it that parents should join good example to their instructions, and confirm by their own behaviour what they teach by their words; for it is a general rule that children follow the example of their parents much sooner than their instructions. And if Christ pronounces a dreadful end on any one who scandalizes His little ones; if He says that it would be better *that one should have a millstone tied round his neck, and cast into the depths of the sea, than scandalize one of His children,* what must be the end of parents if by their bad example they scandalize their own children?

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

ST. JEROME'S ADVICE TO LÆTA ABOUT THE CARE OF HER DAUGHTER.

St. Jerome, in his letter to Læta, wife of Toxotius, St. Paula's son, puts her in mind that she had obtained her daughter of God, at the tombs of the martyrs, in order that she might be brought up to serve Him. "Let her," he says, "be brought up as Samuel was in the temple, and the Baptist in the desert, in utter ignorance of vanity and vice. Let her never hear, learn, or discourse of anything but what may conduce to the fear of God. Let her never hear bad words, nor learn profane songs; but as soon as she can speak, let her learn some parts of the Psalms. No rude boys must come near her, nor even girls or maids, but such as are strangers to the maxims and conversations of the world. Let the words which she learns be chosen and holy, such as the names of the Prophets and Apostles." He adds, that she should never see anything in her father or mother which it would be a fault for her to imitate; and that she should never go out but with her mother to the church or tombs of the martyrs. He goes on to say, that she may read the works of St. Cyprian, the epistles of St. Athanasius, and the writings of St. Hilary. He desires Læta, if it would be difficult to practise these lessons at Rome, to send her daughter to her grandmother, Paula, and to her aunt, Eustochium, at Bethlehem, where her piety and education would be more secure. Læta followed his advice. St. Paula the younger being sent to Bethlehem, consecrated herself to Christ in her grandmother's monastery, and became afterwards the foundress and abbess of a new nunnery there. Læta imitated, at Rome, the excessive charity to the poor, and other extraordinary virtues of her mother-in-law; and some time after this, embraced a state of perpetual continency.

QUEEN BLANCHE'S CARE OF HER SON, LOUIS IX., KING OF FRANCE.

Blanche, daughter of Alphonsus IX., King of Castile, and mother of Louis IX., was a princess of extraordinary beauty and prudence, was endued with zeal for religion and other virtues, and had great talents for government. To her care and attention in the education of St. Louis, we are indebted, under God, for the great example of

this saint's virtues. From his birth she would never suffer him to suck any breast but her own, and gave all possible attention to every part of his education, and that of her other children. By her care he was perfectly master of the Latin tongue, learned to speak in public, and to write with elegance, grace, and dignity. He was a good historian, and often read the works of the Fathers. It was his mother's first care to instil into his tender soul the highest esteem and awe for everything that regarded the worship of God. She imbued his mind with the strongest sentiments of religion and virtue, and a particular love of holy chastity. She used often to say to him, when he was a child: "I love you, my darling son, with all the tenderness a mother is capable of; but I would infinitely rather see you fall down dead at my feet, than that you should ever commit a mortal sin." The king frequently said to others, that the strong impression which this important lesson made on his mind was never effaced during his whole life, and that no day passed in which it did not recur, and excite him vigorously to arm himself afresh against all snares and dangers of surprise.

ST. ANSELM'S ADVICE TO THE ABBOT ABOUT CORRECTING THE PUPILS UNDER HIS CARE.

A certain abbot, who had the reputation of sanctity, complained one day to St. Anselm, Prior of the Convent of Bec, of the boys who were at that time receiving their education at the monastery. "We frequently flog them," said he, "and yet they are growing every day worse." "And when the pupils of your monastery grow up to be young men," asked Anselm, "what are their dispositions?" "Stupid and brutish," answered the abbot. "A beautiful education, indeed, it must be," replied St. Anselm, "which changes men into beasts! But tell me, my lord abbot, if, after having planted a tree in your garden, you should so hem it in on all sides that it could not possibly extend its branches, what sort of tree would it become after some years' growth? Would it not become stunted and crabbed, and perfectly useless? So it is with children. If you be too harsh in your conduct towards them, constraining their liberty, and by too severe correction destroying their natural good feelings, they will grow up obstinate, hardened, and steeled against any good advice. Seeing nothing in you but severity and harshness, they have no esteem and affection for you, for they think that your severity is the effect of hatred and envy. These feelings increase with their years, and their minds being confined, and inclined towards vice, and not having been brought up with kindness and love, they look on the whole world with feelings of aversion and bitterness. A

mind fully formed and resolute takes pleasure in humiliations and afflictions, and prays for his enemies; a weak soul must be led by sweetness and kindness, and his faults should be sometimes charitably overlooked." The abbot, after having listened to St. Anselm for some time, cast himself at the feet of the saint, acknowledged that hitherto he was rather indiscreet in the treatment of children, and promised amendment for the future.—*Life of St. Anselm.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is the first duty of parents to children?
2. Should parents instruct their children in their duties to God?
3. Does the salvation of children depend in a great measure on early instruction?
4. Why is instruction in our early years so necessary?
5. Why are parents in particular obliged to instruct their children?
6. In what way should parents instruct their children?
7. On what subjects should grown-up children be instructed?
8. Is it necessary that parents should watch over their children?
9. What measures should be taken by parents to preserve the morals of their children?
10. Is the correction of children an essential duty of parents?
11. In what manner should parents correct their children?
12. Should parents when in a passion correct their children?
13. Can you prove from Scripture that disobedient children should be punished with a scourge?
14. Why was Heli, the high priest, so severely punished by God?
15. What evil consequences flow from not chastising children?
16. In what way should parents chastise their children?
17. Are instruction and admonition of much avail without good example?
18. Why is it that children will attend to example rather than to advice or instruction?

PRACTICE.

1. Instil into the youthful minds of children the knowledge of one God, and of Three Persons in God.
2. Never allow children to keep company with bad companions,

and banish from your house all books which treat on obscene subjects or profane love.

3. Let your admonitions to children be always supported by your own good example.

PRAYER.

O sweet Jesus! aid us by Thy holy grace to discharge the heavy and responsible duties that devolve on us in regard to our children. We well know that children are entrusted to us as a deposit, and that a strict account will be demanded of us, on the last day, of the way in which we have brought them up, and that their blood will be required at our hands, if through our neglect their souls have been lost. Knowing all this, dear Lord! we promise Thee that henceforward we shall endeavour to instruct them in the truths of religion, and lead them to Thee by correcting and admonishing them, and in particular by giving them good example. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON THE DUTIES OF SUBJECTS TO THEIR RULERS.

Q. What are the chief duties of subjects to the temporal powers?

A. "To be subject to them, and to honour and obey them, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake; for so is the will of God." (1 Peter; Rom. xiii.)

1. We shall, in this chapter, dear children, speak of the duties which subjects owe their sovereign, and those who are appointed by the sovereign to rule them, such as governors, judges, and magistrates. According to the words of St. Peter, Christians owe their king or queen, and other temporal rulers, *submission*, *honour*, and *obedience*. Of submission to the ruling powers, St. Peter adds: "Be ye subject, therefore, to every human crea-

ture for God's sake, whether it be to the king as excelling, or to governors as sent by him." (1 Peter, ii. 13, 14.) The *submission* which we pay them is referred to God; it is paid to their exalted dignity, which is derived from, and an emblem of the power of God. In the power possessed by our temporal rulers, we recognize a superintending Providence, who has committed to them the administration of the state, and who makes use of them as the ministers of His power. Of this duty of submission to our sovereign ruler, we shall speak more at large in a subsequent question.

2. *Honour* and respect we also owe to our king or queen, and those appointed by them to govern us. This obligation of *honour* and respect is so natural and evident, that even the most barbarous nations have the deepest respect for their sovereigns. This *honour* is founded on the exalted places they fill; for if we are bound to honour all our superiors, we certainly should pay the greatest respect to our sovereign. No subject is dispensed from this duty, though even the sovereign should be a heretic, a pagan, or a person of the most dissolute morals. It is not that we respect their profligacy or wickedness, should immorality debase the lives of public functionaries; no, we revere the authority of God, with which they are invested. The sovereigns under which the Christians of the early ages of the Church lived were idolators, and yet St. Peter ordained all to *honour* them.

3. The third duty of a subject "to the temporal powers" is *obedience*—obedience to their just laws and ordinances. The early Christians, instructed by the Apostles, practised the strictest obedience and the most perfect submission to idolatrous emperors and kings, although they experienced at their hands the direst persecutions. Only in one thing were they disobedient, and that was in refusing to adore false gods, or to do anything forbidden by the law of God; and even

this refusal was given in terms respectful to the emperors. *Obedience* to the laws of our sovereign requires that we should pay the *taxes* and *duty* imposed on us. These taxes are imposed in order to provide for the necessities of the state in which we live—its soldiers, its sailors, and its various other servants—and which affords us protection; and it is only equitable that we should defray the expenses of all those persons and things that are deemed necessary for our well-being. This is what St. Paul inculcates in his epistle to the Romans: "For therefore also you pay tribute; for they are the ministers of God, serving unto this purpose. Render, therefore, to all men their dues. Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom." (Rom. xiii. 16.)

4. *Submission, honour,* and *obedience,* should be paid to the temporal powers, "not only for wrath," that is, not only through fear of the punishment that may be inflicted on those who are wanting in those duties to their sovereign, "but also for conscience sake," that is, from motives of religion, so as to avoid incurring the guilt of sin before God, whose ministers our temporal rulers are. "For such is the will of God," because it is God who governs the world, and who gives kings to nations, and who invests them with His own authority for the purpose of ruling these nations; for, as the Apostle says, "there is no power but from God; and those that are, are ordained of God." (Rom. xiii. 1.)

Q. Does the Scripture require any other duty of subjects?

A. Yes; "to pray for kings and all who are in high station, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life." (1 Tim. ii.)

5. Besides the duty of submission, honour, and obedience, which subjects owe their sovereigns, they should also offer up their fervent prayers for their

spiritual and temporal happiness, and for the prosperity of their country. Yes; it is only just that we should pray with fervour for "kings, and all who are in high station." Zeal for the glory of God and the good of religion should induce all Christians to pray that God would inspire their rulers with the spirit of wisdom and justice, because the peace of the Church depends on the wisdom and clemency of temporal rulers. Our own interest even should engage us to pray for the safety of our rulers. For if we have duties to fulfil towards our sovereign, our sovereign has important duties to fulfil towards us. It is for him to maintain good order in the state, to render justice to all, to select worthy servants. But is it not our interest, and our highest interest, that they should be faithful in the performance of these duties? What happiness is it for people to be ruled by a wise, religious, and temperate sovereign, who has only in view the peace of the kingdom and the well-being of his subjects! And as the distinction and order of power is from God, we must not only pray for kings, but also for subordinate occupants of power "who are in high station;" for as it is God who rules through monarchs, it is through the monarchs that judges and magistrates govern.

6. "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life," and enjoy happiness here below, we should unceasingly pour forth our prayers to heaven, that our rulers may govern their subjects, of all classes and creeds, with justice and humanity, consult for their welfare and happiness, by the enactment of just and impartial laws, and adjust their foreign and domestic relations in such a spirit and manner, as to ward off the miseries and calamities of war and civil commotions. "We pray for the emperors," says Tertullian, "that God would grant them a long life, a secure throne, and a safe family, brave armies, a faithful council, and a just people; in fine, that He would grant them peace, and whatever else they could wish, either for themselves or their

empire." If we desire for ourselves *quietness* and *peace*, and for our country prosperity and happiness, let us "pray for kings (queens), and all who are in high station."

Q. Is it sinful to resist or combine against the established authorities, or to speak with contempt or disrespect of those who rule over us?

A. Yes; St. Paul says: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. He that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist purchase to themselves damnation." (Rom. xiii.)

7. From these words of St. Paul, it clearly follows that every man, without exception, who is a subject, owes allegiance and fidelity to the "higher powers," that is, persons vested with political power for governing and ruling others, such as princes, judges, and magistrates. As "there is no power but from God," obedience is due to its possessor, as the vicar of God—obedience, voluntary, hearty, and interior, out of respect for God, whom he represents. And the Apostle adds, that "he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God," that is, contravenes the order which God has established; and subjects, by *resisting* or contravening that order, "purchase to themselves damnation," that is, temporal punishment here for *resisting* civil legitimate authority, legitimately exercising its functions, and by such *resistance* deserve for themselves eternal *damnation* hereafter. Therefore, it is plain—though it may appear to some a matter of surprise—that "to resist or combine against the established authorities" is sinful, even though their sentiments and feelings towards us should be most unfriendly, and their hostility towards our religion open and avowed; for personal enmity and

hostility do not afford a just cause to release us from the duty of submission to their persons and authority.

8. Princes and superiors, legitimately created as such, are therefore to be obeyed, although wicked and impious, for they derive their power from God. But obedience to the established authorities has its limits; for, as St. Chrysostom says, in his Homily xxiii.: St. Paul does not say that there is no prince but from God, but only that there is no *power* but from God, meaning no lawful power, and speaking of true and just laws. "If," says a learned divine, commenting on this text of St. Paul, "there be question of a superior who is lawfully possessed of power, but who outstrips the bounds of his authority, obedience is not necessarily to be tendered to him. Should he command what is good or indifferent, he *may* be obeyed; should he command what is evil, he must be resisted: *Obediendum est Deo magis quam hominibus.*"* A wicked and unjust mandate is not the legitimate exercise of power, but an act of perverse injustice.

9. His Holiness Gregory XVI., in his encyclical letter addressed to all the patriarchs, primates, archbishops, and bishops, and dated 15th August, 1832, after having quoted the words of St. Paul (as given in the answer to the question which we are just explaining), holds out as an example of the submission which should be paid to "the established authorities," the conduct of the first Christians, who, during three centuries of persecution, revolted not, but preferred death to violent resistance. "The Christian soldiers," according to St. Augustin, "served an unbelieving emperor; but if there was question of the cause of Jesus Christ, they would acknowledge no other than Him who is in heaven. They made a distinction between the eternal Master and the temporal master, and for the sake of the eternal Master, they

* An exposition of the Epistles of St. Paul, by the Right Rev. John MacEvilly.

were submissive to the temporal master. It was this duty of submission that St. Maurice had before his eyes, when, in his remonstrance to Maximian, he said: "We are your soldiers, but are servants of the true God. We owe you military service and obedience. We have seen our companions slain without lamenting them. We have arms in our hands, but we do not resist, because we had rather die innocent than to be guilty of shedding blood."

10. "This allegiance of the Christians of the early ages is the more to be admired, from the fact that they were at that time, as we learn from Tertullian, a very numerous and strong body, and would present a formidable front had they been willing to declare themselves insurrectionists. We are but of yesterday, says Tertullian, and we fill your towns, cities, and camps, the palace, the senate, and the forum. From the provocation we have received, should we not be inclined to stand up in insurrection if our religion did not oblige us to lay down our lives sooner than to be guilty of shedding blood? These illustrious examples of inviolable submission to princes, which then were the necessary results of the holy precepts of the Christian religion, are highly condemnatory of the detestable insolence and wickedness of all those who, fired with the intemperate ardour of unlicensed liberty, endeavour in every way to shake and subvert all the ruling princes, whilst slavery, under the mask of liberty, is the only boon that they can confer on the people."

11. We must then conclude that it is "sinful to resist or combine against the established authorities," and that all secret combinations and societies, formed with the object of throwing off allegiance to the reigning sovereign, are most reprehensible, and productive of consequences disastrous to society. The Church has at all times held such secret combinations in abhorrence, and has visited all who have taken *an oath* to observe the

rules of such secret societies and combinations with the severest penalties. Every member of the Church should then keep aloof from all such secret assemblies, and should never be induced by either threats or promises to join in them. Instead of inveighing against "the established authorities" on all occasions and under all circumstances, and "speaking with contempt and disrespect of those who rule over us," we should rather offer up our fervent prayers for them, begging of God that He may render them just, mild, and merciful.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

ST. MAURICE'S SUBMISSION TO HIS SOVEREIGN, THE EMPEROR MAXIMIAN.

When the Theban legion, which was composed chiefly of Christians, refused to obey the tyrant Maximian, ordering them to offer sacrifice to the false gods, he commanded that every tenth man should be put to death. After the first decimation a second was commanded, unless the soldiers obeyed the orders given; but they cried out through the whole camp, that they were ready to perish to a man, rather than pay honour to idols, or deny the faith of Christ. The emperor sent fresh threats, that if they persisted in their disobedience not a man among them should escape death. The legion answered by the mouth of Maurice, one of their captains, to the following effect:—"We are your soldiers, sire; but we are also the servants of God. We owe you military service and obedience; but we cannot renounce Him who is our Creator and Master, and also yours. From you we have received our pay, but from Him we have received our life. We are as ready as ever to fulfil your orders in all that is not against the law of God; but when you bid us do that which is contrary to His law, we must obey God rather than man. Lead us against the enemy. We are ready to fight against the rebellious and the impious; but we cannot shed the blood of fellow-citizens and innocent men. We took an oath to God before we swore allegiance to you. How can you count upon our fidelity, if we fail in the fidelity we have sworn to God? You bid us seek out and destroy the Christians. Behold, we are all such. We confess God the Father, Author of all things, and Jesus Christ His Son, our Lord. We have seen our companions slain before our eyes, and we do but envy

them the glory of suffering for their God. From us you have nothing to fear; Christians know how to die, but they do not know how to rebel. We have arms, but we shall not use them. We would rather die innocent than live guilty." This legion consisted of about six thousand six hundred men, who were all well armed, and might have sold their lives very dear; but they had learned to give to God what is God's, and to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and they showed their courage more in dying than in the most hazardous enterprizes. Maximian, despairing of overcoming their heroic constancy, commanded his whole army to surround them and cut them to pieces. These brave warriors of Christ and faithful soldiers of Maximian made no resistance, but taking off their armour, they all knelt down, and lifting up their hands to heaven, suffered themselves to be butchered like innocent sheep. No complaint or cry was heard among them; they spoke only to encourage one another to die for Christ. In a few moments the ground was covered with their dead bodies, and streams of blood flowed on every side.—*St. Eucherius.*

APOLOGY OF ST. JUSTIN IN REFERENCE TO THE LOYALTY OF THE CHRISTIANS.

St. Justin, in his Apology, which he signed with his own name, and addressed to Antoninus, to the senate, and to the whole Roman people, entreats the emperor to form his judgment of the Christians from their actions, and not from the name they bear, and not to pass sentence against them on the sole and weak pretence of their being called Christians. "Let an impartial inquiry be made," says he "let our conduct be diligently sifted; and if, upon examination, it shall be proved that we are either criminal in our actions or impious in our tenets, let guilt be punished according to its deserts; but if our innocence shall be proved, it will be neither reasonable nor just to treat us like malefactors. With full confidence we defy our most determined enemies to prove the crimes maliciously laid to our charge. Deign only to investigate our conduct, and to scrutinize our principles, and you will with pleasure find, that of all the subjects of your empire, none are more submissive, none more loyal, none more disposed to keep and secure the public peace, than we Christians are. We acknowledge you for our sovereign, sole master of the conquered world. You we respect, and you we cheerfully obey in all things not repugnant to religion. Religious worship belongs to God alone. He is the supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, the great Creator of all things, omnipotent and eternal. In our daily supplications to Him, we humbly beg, that to the imperial power, with which He has invested you, He will vouchsafe to add the glorious prerogative of reigning with wisdom and justice."

ST. ISIDORE OF PELUSIUM ON DUE SUBORDINATION.

St. Isidore lived as a hermit in Pelusium, in Egypt, and his character for sanctity was such, that he was called an angel in human form. In the fifth century he wrote on the due subordination that should reign in a state. "If," said he, "we were all equal in dignity and power, peace could hardly exist among us, and perpetual dissension would everywhere prevail. If kingdoms and sovereignties are established among men; if some command and others obey; if men are not whirled about here and there, like the billows of an angry sea, it is to the wise dispensation of Providence that we are indebted. Even in the brute creation we remark due subordination, some commanding and others obeying. Wild horses and various other animals which dwell in forests acknowledge a chief or leader. The bees have their queen, and are ruled by her. Sound the depths of the sea, and even there you will find order and subordination among the finny tribes—regular movements under the direction of one, like an army marching under the orders of a recognized general. In individual man is there not even subordination?—the head ruling, and the feet and hands executing its orders. Must we not then avow that every sovereignty, both as to its form and establishment, comes from God?"—*St. Isidore.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What are the duties which we owe to our temporal rulers?
2. How do you prove that we should honour our sovereign ruler?
3. Should we be obedient to the ruling powers, no matter how wicked they be?
4. Should the duties we owe our rulers be performed only through fear?
5. How do you prove that we should pray for our rulers?
6. What motive particularly should induce us to pray for our rulers?
7. Can you prove from St. Paul the duty of allegiance to sovereign power?
8. Should we obey the established authorities in everything they command?
9. What does Pope Gregory XVI. say in reference to the fidelity of the first Christians to their rulers?

10. What conclusion does Pope Gregory draw from the fidelity of the early Christians to their rulers?

11. Has the Church condemned secret societies formed against the ruling powers?

PRACTICE.

1. Entertain reverence and respect for the sovereign ruler of the kingdom, as *every power* is from God.

2. Honour and obey all those who administer justice in the name of the sovereign.

3. Never be induced to become a member of a secret society, whose object is anything against the laws of the kingdom.

PRAYER.

We have now, O Lord! been taught the necessity of obedience to our temporal sovereign, and have learned from the words of St. Paul the duties we owe to all those who are in power. In accordance with the Apostle's teaching, and in imitation of the first Christians, we shall evermore pay that respect and obedience to our sovereign, and all others in power, which, as subjects and Catholics, are expected from us. However unfriendly to our interests our rulers may be, we shall still be submissive to them, and never be guilty of *resisting Thy ordinance.* Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON THE DUTIES OF MASTERS AND SERVANTS.

Q. What are the chief duties of masters to their servants, apprentices, and others under their care?

A. To lead them to God by word and example; to see that they be exact in their religious duties; to treat them with justice and humanity; and to correct and reprove them when necessary.

1. "The chief duties of masters" and mistresses "towards their servants" may be reduced to the four just mentioned. The first duty is "to lead them to God by word and example." To admonish and advise servants, and thus by "word" to lead them to God, is a very necessary duty of masters; for the authority given by God to masters over their servants is not so much on the master's account as for the benefit of those under their charge, as is the case with all others in authority as well as masters. As their authority over servants is, then, given for the benefit of those servants, they should admonish and advise them, when they find that advice necessary to preserve them from sin and danger. Not only by word, but also, and in particular, by "good example," should masters *lead* servants *to God*. Our nature is so formed, as we know from experience, that we are much more ready to follow the example of what we see in others than the advice and admonition that we receive from them. Nothing is more ordinary than that people who live in the same house should have the same customs, the same dispositions, and the same manners, because they learn from one another's example. But as persons more readily follow the example of what is bad than of what is good, masters should consider no duty so obligatory as that of giving good example to servants. Masters and mistresses should, therefore, in their words and works, be patterns of virtue to their servants. Their words should give edification, and not scandal; and on that account no obscene, profane, or scurrilous language should be ever uttered by them, or allowed by them to be uttered by others. They should give them good example in works, and, particularly, in having daily family prayers among them, at least at night, and in having read for them a good religious book, when the labours of the day are over. Example of this sort will tend much to the benefit of servants, and will incite and encourage

them to perform all their actions well. But if bad example, such as cursing, working on Sundays, not observing the fasts of the Church, be given them, it will have the contrary effect, and will render remonstrance and advice of no effect.

2. The second duty of masters to servants is "to see that they be exact in their religious duties," that is, to see that they faithfully perform their duties to God, particularly in saying their prayers—in spending the Sundays and holidays well—in approaching the sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist. If "servants" be ignorant of the principal parts of the Christian doctrine, "masters" should take care that they be instructed in the religious truths necessary to be known by them, either by sending them to catechism on Sundays and holidays, or getting them instructed at home. God requires that these *duties* should be performed by all persons; and as masters and heads of families are but stewards in the family of God, they are obliged to see that "servants and others under their care" faithfully perform them. It is also the interest of the "masters" themselves that these duties be performed by their servants, because the better instructed and the more attentive they are to their religious duties, the more faithful they will be to their masters. Masters should always recollect these words of St. Paul, in reference to the care which they should have of all those under them: "If any one has not care of his own, and especially of those of his household, he has renounced his faith, and is become worse than an infidel."

3. The third duty "of masters to servants" is, "to treat them with justice and humanity," as their fellow-Christians; for if we should be *just* and *humane* towards all persons, and should not treat any one—even one the greatest stranger to us—injuriously and harshly, how much more should we act so towards domestics, and all

those under our care! A *just* and *kind* treatment of servants gains their affections, attaches them to their masters, preserves peace, and makes them feel at home and happy. This *humane* treatment consists in not overworking them, but allowing them some time for relaxation after the severe duties of the day—in giving orders in an easy and gentle manner, not with imperiousness and contempt—in making some return of gratitude to those who have been invariably faithful to their duties during their long service in the family. "If," says the book of Ecclesiasticus, "thou hast a faithful servant, let him be to thee as thy own soul; treat him as a brother." (Ecclus. xxxiii. 31.) Hence, when faithful servants become sick, or when old age approaches, or any misfortune comes upon them, we should not cast them out of doors, but we should then take particular care of them, and willingly give them all the relief and assistance they require. We should, in particular, treat them with "justice," by giving them wholesome and sufficient food, and paying them the full amount of their wages, which is so strongly enforced in Scripture, as we shall see in the next question.

4. The fourth duty "of masters to servants" is, "to correct and reprove them when necessary." Masters should, then, be careful in reproving and correcting their servants, whenever they offend God by blaspheming, cursing, speaking immodest words, or by doing anything that may scandalize those in the same house or in the same employment. And if servants, notwithstanding the *correction* given them, continue to blaspheme, curse, or speak obscene words, to the great scandal of fellow-servants and children, they should be immediately dismissed, however industrious and faithful to their master they may be; for, as St. Paul says, "if thy eye scandalize thee, pull it out." If a master of a family considers it his duty to reprove and correct

his servants for any faults committed against himself, how much more should he *correct* them when they insult God, and transgress His laws by scandalous deeds and words!

5. "Masters," however, should not be continually reproving their servants, and chiding and scolding them for every little mistake or fault they may commit. Servants are flesh and blood as well as others, and therefore masters and mistresses should make allowance for the weakness of human nature, and witness many little failings without pretending to notice them. The Scripture warns us against harshness in correcting servants: "Be not as a lion in thy house, terrifying them of thy household, and oppressing them that are under thee." (Ecclus. iv. 35.)

Q. What does St. Paul say to masters?

A. "Masters, do to your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that you have also a Master in heaven." (Coloss. iv. 1.)

6. You see, dear children, that St. Paul, in the passage just quoted, inculcates on masters the necessity of treating their servants with *justice* and *equality*. This *justice* consists in paying them their lawful wages, and in supplying them with necessary and wholesome diet; and this *equality* consists in treating them with feelings of kindness and humanity, neither overburdening them with labour, but assigning to each the duties he can perform; nor exacting with too much rigour the performance of the tasks assigned them.

7. Of all the duties of masters to servants, there is not one more obligatory than that of treating them with *justice*. "Masters" are bound by every law, divine and human, to "do to their servants that which is just." Servants make a sacrifice to their masters of

their rest, their time, their liberty, their sweat, their labour; and as they do so, would it not be a crying injustice to defraud them of their wages, by diminishing the sum, or protracting the payment, under the pretence of some negligence or other on their part, some loss sustained through their fault, or something or other broken through their inattention? Tobias gives this advice to his son: "If any man hath done any work for thee, immediately pay him his hire, and let not the wages of thy hired servant stay with thee at all." (Tob. iv. 15, 17.) If your servants work not satisfactorily, or are not suited to the nature of your work, dismiss them if you will, but hold not back the whole or a part of their wages; for, according to St. James, *defrauding labourers of their wages crieth up to heaven for vengeance.* If masters defraud their servants of their wages, God will take in hand their defence, hear to their groans and tears, and inflict terrible vengeance on their oppressors. Let masters then "know that they have also a Master in heaven," with whom there is no exception of persons; and let them understand that according as they mete out to their servants, God will mete out to them. If they be just and kind to servants, God will be indulgent to them; but if they treat them with injustice and severity, they must be prepared to receive at God's hands the punishment due to their inhumanity.

Q. What are the chief duties of servants and apprentices to their masters?

A. To be obedient, respectful, and faithful to them; to be diligent in their work and services, and not to suffer their masters to be injured in their property by any other person. (Ephes. vi.; Coloss. iii.)

8. "The chief duties of servants and apprentices to

their masters" are obedience, respect, fidelity, and diligence. In the first place, *obedience* to the orders of a master is one of the principal duties of a servant; and he who is not *obedient* cannot be considered a good Christian servant. "Servants," says St. Paul, "be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the simplicity of your heart, as to Christ." (Eph. vi. 5.) In this passage from the Apostle, we find *obedience* of servants to masters strongly insisted on, and also what the nature of that obedience should be. "Obey," says he, "with fear and trembling," not with fear of men, but with the holy fear of God, and the desire of pleasing Him. With "trembling" or respect; for in the persons of their masters, servants should consider Jesus Christ, and know that in obeying them they obey Him. "In the simplicity of your heart" obedience should be rendered to your master, that is, without stubbornness, murmuring, or any contradiction, but cheerfully and with a hearty good will, as unto Christ Himself. Servants should be obedient to their masters in "all things," that is, in all their lawful commands, particularly in everything that has reference to the nature of the service for which they have been hired; for in his epistle to Titus, St. Paul tells him to "exhort servants to be obedient to their masters in all things." (Titus, ii. 9.)

9. Servants should, therefore, perform willingly the commands of their masters; and though their masters or mistresses may sometimes be unreasonable and too exacting, they still should obey and be submissive, for reluctance will render obedience painful. They should ever bear in mind that the cheerful performance of difficult and harsh commands will increase their merit in the sight of God; and that for a faithful compliance with their master's orders, their reward hereafter will be great—no other than the kingdom of heaven. "Whatsoever you do, do it from the heart, as to the

Lord and not to men," says the Apostle, "knowing that you shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance." (Col. iii. 22.)

10. The second duty which servants or apprentices owe their masters is *respect*. St. Paul, speaking of servants, in his epistle to Timothy, says: "Whosoever are servants under the yoke, let them count their masters worthy of all honour, lest the name of the Lord and His doctrine be blasphemed." (1 Tim. vi. 1.) We here see how strictly servants are commanded to honour and *respect* their masters; and so essential is this respect, that, as we are told by the Apostle, a neglect of it brings a reproach upon our Lord Himself, and tends to render His doctrines despised and "blasphemed." And as a consequence, servants who act contrary to this duty of *respect* for masters, comply not with the duties of their religion. Servants should not only *respect* kind and indulgent masters, but also harsh and exacting masters—"not only the good and gentle, but also the froward," as St. Peter says. This duty of *respect* will require from servants and apprentices, that they must not fly into a passion, and make use of abusive language, if their masters or mistresses find it necessary to reprove and scold them for any fault; for such conduct would be a contempt of God Himself, whose authority their masters hold. If they have been guilty of the fault for which they receive reproof, they should humbly acknowledge it, ask pardon, and promise amendment for the future; but if they be innocent, let them for the present bear patiently with their master's anger and excitement, but when the heat of passion is over, they can declare their innocence of the charge brought against them. We read in Genesis, that when Agar behaved disrespectfully to her mistress Sarah, and fled from her, the angel of God appeared to her and said: "Return to thy mistress, and humble thyself under her hand." (Gen. xvi. 9.)

11. This duty of *respect* requires also from "servants

and apprentices" that they should never manifest any signs of contempt or disrespect for their masters and mistresses when they are not present, by either words or gestures—that they should never speak ill of them, nor expose any failings and imperfections they may observe in them, but should rather make known their good qualities, and defend their character when attacked by others. Another thing of which servants and apprentices should be particularly careful is, never to discover to others any matters which their masters and mistresses wish should be kept secret—as, for example, disunion in the family, debts, failures in business, or any other secrets, which, if known, would expose them to censure and contempt.

12. The third duty "of servants and apprentices to their masters" is fidelity—"to be faithful to them, and not to suffer their masters to be injured in their property by any person." If all persons are bound to be just and faithful to each other, and to give every one his own, how much more are "servants and apprentices" obliged to be just and "faithful" to their masters; because, in the case of "servants and apprentices," besides the common duty of justice, which all owe to each other, there is an understood or implied contract of *fidelity*, and on that account "their masters" intrust their goods and work to them. Hence, St. Paul says, in his epistle to Titus: "Exhort servants to be obedient to their masters—not defrauding, but in all things showing good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." (Titus, ii. 9, 10.)

13. Now, this justice or *fidelity* obliges "servants and apprentices" not to wrong their masters and mistresses in their goods, either by taking them for their own purposes, or giving them away to others, or wasting them, and that neither in little nor great matters. The goods which are under the care of "servants and apprentices" are not their own, they are only intrusted to them; and

if they were to take any of them, or destroy them, or squander them away, they would be guilty of the sin of *injustice*, and would be bound to restore the thing itself taken, or the value of it. They should manage the property under their care as if it were their own, and let not their masters or mistresses suffer any loss through their connivance, neglect, or prodigality. If money be intrusted to them for the purpose of buying what the master or mistress may require, they must be "faithful" in disposing it to the best advantage, and in giving a fair account of what they have laid out—not pretending that they gave more for a certain article than they really expended, and not keeping any part of it to themselves on the plea that they bought the article cheaper than their master or mistress could purchase it. All that they save—all the profit they make in buying or selling at a better rate than others, belongs to their master or mistress, who employs them for that purpose; and if they make bad bargains for them, on account of some presents given to them by those with whom they deal, they are guilty of a breach of *fidelity* and a violation of justice.

14. If "servants and apprentices" waste and spoil what is under their care—give away what does not belong to them without the permission of the masters or mistresses—pilfer or take for their own use any article or dress, or whatever is not intended they should take—entertain their friends or acquaintances, either at home or abroad, with the food and drink that belongs to their masters or mistresses—retain the money they find in the sweeping of the shop or rooms—break and destroy, by their great neglect or carelessness, any of the various articles given to them in charge, they are not "faithful" to their masters or mistresses, but are unfaithful, guilty of sin; and to obtain pardon of it, they should repair the loss their masters or mistresses have sustained by their want of *fidelity*. It is also a breach of *fidelity*,

contrary to the law of God, and condemned by the Church, to take money or property by way of recompensing oneself, upon the specious pretext that one's wages are too low, and not in proportion to the work performed. Such a practice is very unjust, and servants should never have recourse to it under any circumstances.

15. "Servants and apprentices" are obliged not only to be "faithful" themselves, in not taking what does not belong to them, but are also bound "not to suffer their masters to be injured in their property by any person." It is their duty to see that their masters and mistresses' property be not taken away by others; and they should never, on any account, either encourage or connive at such an unjust practice, for if they do, they become partakers of the crime of injustice. They should be particularly careful in not receiving presents from children, which they know have been purchased by money pilfered from these children's parents. In order to be "faithful" to their masters, they should use every exertion to hinder others from wronging them; and if they cannot themselves prevent the wrong, they should make known the matter to their masters or mistresses, that it may be checked, or that what has been taken may be restored.

16. The fourth duty "of servants and apprentices to their masters" and mistresses is *diligence*—"to be diligent in their work and services." This fourth duty obliges them to employ their time well, and to be very careful in doing well whatever work their masters are pleased to lay upon them; and they should be as diligent in the performance of that in the absence of their masters or mistresses, as they would be if they were present. When their masters are from home, the hours should not be spent in drinking, playing, or talking, for servants should remember that though their master or mistress' eye is not upon them, yet the all-seeing eye of God beholds them, to whom, on the last day, they

must render a strict account for the time idly spent; for Jesus Christ Himself says: "If the evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord is long a-coming, and shall eat and drink with drunkards; the lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and at an hour that he knoweth not; and shall separate him, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxiv. 48.)

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

ST. MONICA'S KINDNESS TO HER SERVANT.

In the house of St. Monica, who in after life became the mother of the great St. Augustin, lived an old servant, who was much respected on account of her great experience and her eminent virtues. She was treated as one of the members of the family. To her care the children were entrusted, and they were obliged to obey her. Indeed, it was to this old servant that St. Monica was indebted for her excellent training. In every place, and under all circumstances, she never ceased instructing and admonishing her. St. Monica was not forgetful of the care bestowed upon her, but ever after proved her gratitude to this old and prudent servant. A long time after the death of this good old woman, she still spoke of her attention and kindness, and she often became the subject of conversation between St. Monica and her son Augustin, as we read in his book of *the Confessions.*

THE FIDELITY OF JOSEPH TO HIS MASTER.

Joseph being appointed by Putiphar to superintend his household, acquitted himself faithfully of the trust that was reposed in him. He was happy and enjoying the sunshine of his good fortune, when a sudden storm arose from a quarter he had the least suspected. Amongst his many admirers was his mistress, Putiphar's wife. She beheld him with a fond eye; she grew amorous, and conceived a criminal affection for him; she discovered to him her passion; she solicited his consent without being able to obtain it. Far from

being checked by the first refusal, she returned again to the charge; she pressed and solicited with more eager warmth. How is it possible, replied the virtuous youth, that I should think of being so unfaithful to a master who has been so good, and placed such confidence in me? How is it possible that I should consent to commit such a sin in the presence of my God? This steady resistance increased her desires. Finding him one day alone in her apartments, she attacked him with fresh eagerness; she laid hold of him, and began to offer violence. In this situation, and having no witness near, Joseph had but to fly. Her slighted love then turned to fury. She screamed aloud, as if Joseph had made some violent assault upon her honour, and she ran out with his cloak in her hand, as a proof of her assertion. She carried it to her husband as a trophy of her supposed fidelity to him. She was believed, and the faithful and virtuous Joseph condemned.—*Genesis.*

ST. ZITA, A MODEL OF FIDELITY AND DILIGENCE TO SERVANTS.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, there was born in Montsegradi, a village about eight miles from Lucca, a poor daughter named Zita. She was brought up with the greatest care, in the fear of God, by her poor virtuous mother. The sweetness and modesty of the young child charmed everyone who saw her. At twelve years of age she was put to service in the family of a citizen of Lucca, named Fatanelli. Being thoroughly persuaded that labour is enjoined on all as a punishment of a sin, so far from expressing any sort of complaint at her state, she blessed God for placing her in a station in which she could find all the means for sanctifying her soul. She considered her work as an employment assigned her by God, and as part of her penance, and obeyed her master and mistress in all things as being placed over her by God. She always rose several hours before the rest of the family, and employed in prayer a considerable part of the time which others gave to sleep. Notwithstanding her extreme attention to her exterior employments, she acquired a wonderful facility of joining with them almost continual mental prayer, and of keeping her soul constantly attentive to the divine presence. Who would not imagine that such a person should not have been esteemed and beloved by all who knew her? Yet, her modesty was called by her fellow-servants simplicity, and want of spirit and sense; and her diligence was judged to have no other spring than affectation and secret pride. Her mistress was a long time extremely prepossessed against her, and her passionate master could not bear her in his sight without transports of rage. So unjustly despised, overburdened, reviled, and often beaten, she never

repined or lost her patience, but always preserved the same sweetness in her countenance, and the same meekness and charity in her heart and words, and abated nothing of her application to her duties. Her master and mistress discovered at last the treasure which their family possessed in the fidelity and example of the humble servant, and her fellow-servants gave due praise to her virtue. Being made housekeeper, and seeing her master and mistress commit to her, with an entire confidence, the government of their family and management of all their affairs, she was most scrupulously careful in point of economy, remembering that she was to give God an account of the last farthing of what was entrusted as a deposit in her hands; and, though head servant, she never allowed herself the least privilege or exemption in her work on that account. If she was sent on commissions a mile or two in the greatest storms, she set out without delay, executed them punctually, and returned, often almost drowned, without showing any sign of reluctance or murmuring. She never kept anything for herself but the poor garments which she wore; everything else she gave to the poor. Her master, seeing his goods multiply, as it were, in her hands, gave her ample leave to bestow liberal alms on the poor, which she made use of with discretion, but was scrupulous to do nothing without his express authority. In her last sickness she clearly foretold her death, and having prepared herself for her passage, by receiving the last sacraments, she happily expired on the 27th of April, in 1272, being sixty years old.—*Alban Butler.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is the first duty that masters owe servants?
2. What is the second duty required from masters to servants?
3. In what consists the third duty of masters to servants?
4. How should the fourth duty of masters to servants be discharged?
5. Should masters refrain from scolding and chiding too often their servants?
6. In what does justice and equality to servants consist?
7. Is it very sinful to keep back or diminish servants' wages?
8. Can you prove from Scripture that servants should obey their masters?
9. Should servants perform willingly the commands of their masters?
10. In what manner should servants respect their masters?

11. What else does the duty of respect require from servants?
12. Why are servants in particular obliged to be faithful?
13. What does the duty of justice or fidelity require from servants?
14. Mention some of the many ways by which servants commit injustice?
15. Are servants strictly bound to prevent others from injuring their masters' property?
16. In what way should servants perform the duty of diligence?

PRACTICE.

1. Let masters and mistresses often recall to their minds these words of St. Paul: *Masters, do to your servants that which is just and equal.*
2. Masters and servants should entertain for each other feelings of respect, love, and gratitude.
3. Servants should always take the same interest in their masters' concerns as if they were their own.

PRAYER.

We are all equal in your sight, O great Master of masters and servants, of superiors and inferiors! We have now learned, old and young as we are, the reciprocal duties of masters and servants. If hitherto we have lost sight of what Thou requirest at our hands as masters and servants, we now crave Thy pardon. Henceforward we shall be faithful to these duties, and shall act towards each other with justice, clemency, and charity. Grant, dear Lord, that we may ever practise the resolutions we have made, and thus mutually contribute to our happiness here and hereafter. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ON MURDER, ANGER, REVENGE, AND SCANDAL.

Q. Say the fifth Commandment.
A. Thou shalt not kill.

1. "The fifth Commandment" is expressed in a few words—"Thou shalt not kill." The word *kill* means putting one to death; and when God says "Thou shalt not kill," He means that we shall not take away the life of any person, whether in act or in desire, whether ourselves or anyone else; for the command does not say, thou shalt not kill another, but says, in general, "Thou shalt not kill." Again, by the word *kill* is understood not only the actual taking away of life, but also all such actions as have a tendency to do so by hurting the person. This command, according to the explanation given it by Jesus Christ, also forbids those affections and passions of the soul which wish or desire any hurt to our neighbour's person. Now, as anger is the first and smallest tendency of the will to hurt our neighbours, as killing him is the greatest injury we can do him, and as both are forbidden by "the fifth Commandment," all the intermediate degrees are forbidden also.

Q. What is forbidden by the fifth Commandment?
A. All wilful murder, quarrelling, fighting, hatred, anger, and revenge.

2. In the first place, "all wilful murder" is forbidden by the fifth Commandment. To *murder* one, or take

his life away, is a sin of the greatest enormity; it is one of the most grievous injuries we can do against our neighbour—so grievous, that it is a matter of surprise how any person should commit so foul a crime. It is a great injury done to God; for it destroys His image, and on this account He strictly avenges it, especially as it is done against His will, and against His express command: "For whosoever shall shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed; for man was made to the image of God." (Gen. ix. 5.) It is an usurpation of an authority which belongs to God alone; for He is the absolute Master of man's life, to whom alone it belongs to take it away, as it is He alone who can bestow it. It is also the greatest injustice of which we can be guilty, because it deprives our neighbour of what is most valuable to him in this world—so valuable, that all the riches and all the power of man cannot make due reparation for it.

3. There are different grades in *murder*, so that one kind of murder is more grievous than another. There is, first, premeditated or "wilful murder," or that which is designed beforehand in cold blood; and this is the most grievous kind of murder. Of this premeditated or "wilful murder," Cain was guilty when he slew his brother Abel; and so enormous was his crime, that, as God Himself tells us, *it cried to heaven for vengeance*. There is, again, *homicide* or *manslaughter*, which is not intended beforehand, but arises from sudden passion, or from quarrelling. This is not so grievous as the first, because it is not attended with such malice. The murder of kings, pastors of the Church, superiors, and of all in authority, is of a more grievous kind than the murder of others, because their lives are more valuable and necessary. The murder of parents or children, husband or wife, brothers or sisters, or of other relatives, is a crime of peculiar magnitude, and always looked upon with horror and detestation on account of

the close relationship with the murderer and the murdered.

4. There is a kind of murder called *abortion*, which is committed by women in a state of pregnancy, in order to hide their shame, and which is most detestable in the sight of God, and punished even in this life by the severest penalties of the Church. Oh! what an enormous sin it is to cause abortion—to make an infant die without baptism—that is, to cause a soul to be lost for all eternity! What a barbarous remedy, to endeavour to repair the evil of sin committed by a far greater sin! What a crime are all those guilty of who give or advise pregnant women to take or do anything to procure abortion! They murder the soul of the child as well as the body, for by preventing the poor child from being baptized, they exclude it for ever from the kingdom of heaven.

5. "Quarrelling" is also "forbidden by the fifth Commandment." Quarrelling means idle, noisy disputes, warm contentions, and rude strifes. All these are forbidden by this Commandment, because they are, of their own nature, injurious to our neighbour's person as well as to our own, for by them the mind is displeased and vexed, and anger and hatred are excited. They also tend to murder, for it is well known from experience that many murders have sprung from quarrelling. "As the vapour of a chimney," says the book of Ecclesiasticus, "and the smoke of the fire goeth up before the fire; so also injurious words, and reproaches, and threats before blood." (Ecclus. xxii. 30.) "Quarrelling" is a rock which we should carefully avoid, for it is a source of much mischief. We ought, therefore, not quarrel with others upon any consideration, for it is a wicked and pernicious quality, and the mark of a weak mind; as the wise man says: "The lips of a fool intermeddle with strife, and his mouth provoketh quarrels." (Prov. xviii. 6.) If it should happen that any one *quarrels*

with you, even when you give no occasion on your part, endeavour to behave discreetly, not permitting yourself to be carried away by the passion of anger. Strive to appease your neighbour with mildness, according to the advice of the wise man: "A mild answer breaketh wrath; but a harsh word stirreth up fury." (Prov. xv. 1.) Show, in a quiet, gentle manner, that you have done him no wrong, or if you have offended, excuse yourself mildly. If he be not then pacified, withdraw from him to let his anger cool.

6. "Fighting" is "also forbidden by the fifth Commandment." By "fighting" is meant a sanguinary encounter between two or more, in which blows are dealt, either by the hands, sticks, or other dangerous weapons. *Fights* occur in most cases at fairs and markets, and are generally to be traced to the drinking of exciting liquors. We should always, dear children, hold in the greatest horror those brutal affrays, for besides the great offence offered to God by them, there is scarcely anything that lowers man, and brings him down to the level of the brute beasts, as "fighting." Those engaged in such affrays, by their turbulence and sanguinary acts, are like so many enraged animals. If, as our Lord says, *any one who is angry with his brother will be guilty of the judgment*, what guilt must not those incur who attack their brother with brutal blows? Ah, how much it is to be deplored that we should so often be witnesses of those savage encounters between Christians! And what is chiefly to be lamented is, that these *fights* often take place between persons the most closely united, and who should have no feelings towards each other but those of kindness and love. We often see the brother "fighting" with the brother, the husband "fighting" with the wife, and friends the most intimate "fighting" in the most cruel manner with each other. Oh, who can recount the many scandals and frightful consequences of those fights, brawls, and dissensions?

7. "Hatred" is, too, "forbidden by the fifth Commandment." Hatred of our neighbours is, of its own nature, a grievous sin, because it is altogether opposed to that love of our neighbours which God requires from us—"love thy neighbour as thyself." It is also opposed to the love of God. The love of God obliges us to love our neighbour for His sake, because he is the image, the creature, the child of God, and because he has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Hence the Scripture says: "If any man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?" (1 John, iv. 20.) And again, in the same epistle of St. John, we read: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer hath life eternal abiding in himself." (1 John, iii. 15.) Yes, he is a murderer, because he thereby murders his own soul by depriving it of the life of grace, and the hopes of eternal life. Whilst a person *hates* his neighbour, whatever else he does will be of little avail in the sight of God. He may fast, and he may pray, and perform many other good and virtuous works, but these works will not be received by God whilst he entertains *hatred* against his neighbour.

8. "Anger" is likewise "forbidden by the fifth Commandment." *Anger* is a motion or feeling of displeasure and discontent, which arises in our mind against those who have, or are supposed to have injured us, or any of our friends, with a desire of punishing them for the injury done, or supposed to have been done. "Anger" is, of its own nature, a mortal sin. Jesus Christ expressly declares that he "who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment;" and that he who is in that angry state as to call his brother opprobrious names, and to wish him evil, "shall be in danger of hell-fire." (Matt. v.) "Anger" is the source of many other sins, such as oaths, curses, blasphemies, reproaches,

dissensions, enmities, and often murder itself; as Saul, when in *anger*, put to death eighty-five innocent priests of God; and Herod, when in *anger*, murdered the holy innocents. In a word, if we take a view of all the vices of youth, and consider all the misfortunes that befall them, we will find that they generally spring from *anger*. "Anger" is a brutal passion, which renders men like beasts; for what is there more like a brute than a man who cannot suffer the least thing? Beasts fly at everything that hurts them, because they have no reason; and if you become *angry* at everything that displeases you, in what are you different from a beast? and what does your reason avail you?

9. "Anger" clouds the judgment and reason, and renders a man incapable of discerning what is good from what is bad, what is true from what is false, what is useful from what is unprofitable. It makes a person frequently take one for the other, so that a man in anger has nothing but the exterior shape and figure of a man, and the exterior itself is in such a manner changed that it disfigures him. The eyes of an *angry* man strike fire—his countenance becomes pale—his speech interrupted—his body trembling—he shouts and clamours as if he were deprived of his senses. From thence it comes that a person in anger is unsupportable to all the world—every one dreads and abandons him—even his friends fly from him. "Anger," says the wise man, "hath no mercy, nor fury when it breaketh forth: and who can bear the violence of one provoked?" (Prov. xxvii. 4.)

10. "Anger" is altogether contrary to the spirit of Christianity, and is ranked by St. Paul among the works of the flesh which exclude from the kingdom of heaven, as we read in the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Galatians. It is the ruin of friendship among friends, it causes inward grudges, lasting discords, blows, duels, dreadful and miserable deaths. Be, then, always on your guard, dear children, to prevent "anger" when

you see it approaching; but if it should sometimes get the start before you have been able to avoid it, endeavour to return quickly to yourself, and to calm down your mind, and be particularly careful in not saying or doing anything whilst your mind is in an excited state.

11. "Revenge" is, in the last place, "forbidden by the fifth Commandment," and is committed when we willingly injure our neighbour in his person or property, on account of some offence or loss which we have received from him. "Revenge" is very sinful, and is condemned in the most emphatic terms by Jesus Christ. He tells us that so far from taking "revenge" on our enemies, we must even love them: "I say to you, love your enemies; do good to them that hate you." (Matt. v. 44.) And He forbids "revenge" in such a manner, that He will not pardon our sins except we lay it aside altogether: "If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences." (Matt. vi. 15.) You must not, then, dear children, take "revenge," or wish any ill to those who injured you; but, on the contrary, you must desire their good, and act kindly towards them, when their necessities require it.

12. You may say it is difficult to do an act of kindness towards those who injure you. Yes, it is difficult; but God requires it at your hands. Will you say that it is hard not to take *revenge?* But remember that if you *revenge* yourself on your neighbour, God will be revenged on you, and will not "forgive you your offences." You must, dear children, confess that you have been guilty of many offences against God, and have often provoked His anger, but that you hope for pardon. But will you seek for "revenge" for a single offence offered to you, and at the same time expect pardon from God for the many offences which you yourself have committed against Him? In so doing do you not act inconsistently? We must, then, either renounce God and our eternal

salvation, or we must pardon injuries, lay aside all thoughts of "revenge," and return good for evil. In a subsequent question on the "Lord's prayer," we shall again speak on this subject.

Q. Is it ever permitted to kill or maim a fellow-being?
A. Yes; a fellow-being can be put to death, or scourged by public authority, or can be slain in a lawful war.

13. There are three circumstances in which persons can be put to death, or be maimed: 1. In a just war death can be inflicted by a soldier on the enemy, provided the soldier does not act contrary to the law of arms, and has for his motive his country's good, and not a private pique, or the desire of revenge, for this is never lawful. 2. A person is allowed to kill another in defence of his own life, provided he exceeds not the bounds of a just defence; that is, that he does no more than what is necessary for preserving his own life; for one is at liberty to employ the means necessary to rescue himself from the stroke of death. 3. Although it be not allowable for a private person to put the wicked to death, yet the public authority can exercise this power. It is not, then, murder to punish criminals with death, if they be such as disturb the public peace, and are enemies to the common good, provided it be according to the order and method of just laws, and not contrary to the law of God. Thus rebels and murderers are justly condemned to die.

Q. Is self-murder or suicide allowed under any circumstances?
A. No; it is never permitted, for it is a very grievous sin, and a most execrable crime.

14. He who voluntarily puts himself to death is called a *suicide*, that is, a self-murderer. *Suicide* is certainly one of the most grievous kinds of murder, for the following reasons:—1. It is a violation of God's law, and an audacious usurpation of an authority which belongs only

to Him; for God is the sole master of the life of man, and man is only the keeper of it, and not the master of it; it is merely a deposit intrusted to him, and consequently man has no more right to dispose of it than he has of any other loan given him. 2. *Suicide* subverts altogether that principle of self-preservation which is deeply imprinted in the heart of man by nature itself; and when one determines to commit *suicide*, and act in opposition to the principle of self-preservation, his reason must be perverted, and his mind blinded with the most frightful passions. *Suicide* is, generally speaking, the effect of despair or of disappointed ambition, or of some other criminal passion, and is in most cases committed by those who have been the victims of pride and arrogance. Those guilty of *suicide* are punished in this world by being deprived of Christian burial, and are punished in the world to come by the eternal damnation of the soul in hell-fire; as was the case with the unhappy Judas, who in despair hanged himself.

Q. What else is forbidden by the fifth Commandment?

A. All injurious words, giving scandal or bad example, and not to ask pardon of those whom we have offended. (Matt. v. 39.)

15. Besides murder, quarrelling, and fighting, there is also forbidden, by the fifth Commandment, "all injurious words" against our neighbour. We should, then, never speak to others in abusive language, or apply to them opprobious names; for this generally excites their anger, and is the cause of much bad feeling. Contemptuous terms, scoffs, provoking language, insulting epithets, and ridiculous names, are perpetual sources of quarrels and misunderstandings among people. We should never, dear children, make use of "injurious words" to our companions, or to any other persons; for

calling them, for example, *liars, thieves, fools, miscreants, cowards,* is a very great insult offered them, and "is forbidden by the fifth Commandment."

16. "Giving scandal or bad example" is also violation of the fifth Commandment. "Scandal" is the spiritual murder of the soul. The word *scandal,* in its original acceptation, means a rock or stone, or any other obstacle which, laid on the road, will cause passers by to stumble. "Scandal," in its now received sense, means any word, or action, or omission which is either evil in itself or has the appearance of evil, and is, on that account, the occasion of our neighbour's falling into sin. "Scandal" is twofold—*direct* or *indirect.* Scandal is *direct* when a person deliberately intends to induce others to commit sin. Scandal is *indirect* when, without intending to lead others into sin, or wishing it, we say or do anything evil which is calculated to be an occasion of sin to them.

17. There are also two other kinds of scandal—the *scandal of the weak* and *pharisaical scandal.* A person is guilty of *scandal of the weak* when, without having any design of drawing others into sin, he does an indifferent or even a good act, which weak brethren—that is, ignorant and ill-instructed people—are scandalized at seeing, and take occasion from thence to sin. Thus if a person, for just reason, has permission to eat flesh meat on Friday, and is seen by an ignorant person eating it, who not knowing that he has permission, says, "If this person eats flesh meat, why may not I?" He then follows the example he sees, and without any cause or permission eats flesh meat, and therefore sins.

18. When one foresees that weak, ignorant people will probably be scandalized at what he does (though that thing be lawful in itself), and will be induced, by seeing it, to commit sin, he is obliged either to abstain altogether from doing what will produce such evil effects, or to use whatever precautions may prevent them. St.

Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians, is very clear on this point: "Wherefore if meat (that is, if my eating flesh) scandalize my brother, I will never eat flesh, lest I should scandalize my brother." (1 Cor. viii. 13.) Our Saviour Himself performed a miracle that He might be able to pay the tax demanded of Him, though he was not bound to pay it, and assigned this reason: "That we may not scandalize them." (Matt. xvii. 26.) Oh, what a reproach does this example of Jesus Christ and St. Paul convey to many of us, who, when we see our brother scandalized at what we do, say: "What care I. That is his affair and not mine. I am doing no harm; let him look to it."

19. *Pharisaical* scandal is the scandal taken by those who, without reason, but through the malicious and evil disposition of their own hearts, are scandalized at even the good they see in others—putting the worst construction upon what they see and hear. It is called *pharisaical*, because the Pharisees took scandal at Christ Himself. And all those who envy others, because they see them more pious and devout than they themselves are, follow the example of the Pharisees. The occasions of this sort of scandal we are not bound to avoid, because it is not true scandal. We should never be hindered from the performance of our duty on account of that peculiar scandal. And in this we follow the example of our Lord, who, when His disciples told Him that the Pharisees were scandalized at some truth He had said, answered them: "Let them alone, they are blind and leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the pit." (Matt. xv. 14.)

20. The worst kind of scandal is malicious scandal, and is committed principally in the following ways: 1. When one, by smooth speeches and alluring words, or by an immodest dress and carriage, entices others to sin, or teaches them the evil they knew not before, or engages them in dangerous diversions and conversations—

too often occurring among young people—which are the great means by which impurity, drunkenness, and gaming are promoted. 2. When one ridicules and laughs at others on account of their piety and virtue. This is a most crying sin of scandal, for it is one of the chief instruments that the devil makes use of to advance his cause, and to destroy religion and piety. 3. When young persons of different sexes are received into houses at night for the purpose of drinking, or dancing, or gaming, for this is the source of innumerable crimes. 4. When parents speak obscene words, or pronounce blasphemies and curses in the presence of their children; and when they bring into their houses, among their daughters, young men who are in love with them. 5. When what is heard by one is told to another, and by that means hatred, discord, and quarrels arise. Persons who are guilty of this particular scandal are called *tale-bearers*. Their conduct is highly offensive to God, and on the last day they must render a strict account of the sinful consequences of their *tale-bearing*.

21. "Giving scandal or bad example" is most grievous sin, because by it we murder the soul of our neighbour, and outrage Jesus Christ. Scandal deprives our neighbour of the life of grace—the life of the soul. And as the soul is more precious than the body, the death of the soul is more dreadful and fatal than the death of the body; and as the murder of the body cries to heaven for vengeance, how great must be the cry to heaven of the murder of the soul! You have, dear children, a great horror of murder—you would feel indignant and humbled at being suspected of so black a crime; but the crime of scandal is not merely the murder of the body, but the murder of the very soul—far more precious than the body. On this account it is that our Saviour denounces in such strong words the sin of scandal. In St. Matthew He says: "But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in

Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. xviii. 6.) What hope of life can the man entertain who is cast into the sea with a millstone about his neck?

22. *Scandal* outrages Jesus Christ, because it robs Him of those souls for which He shed the last drop of His precious blood—it defeats, in a manner, the ends for which Jesus Christ came on earth. Our Lord came on earth to seek out those who had strayed, and to save those who had perished; but the man of *scandal* destroys the souls for which Jesus suffered and died. By *scandal* we are adversaries and opposers of our Redeemer, for we espouse the interests of the devil in opposition to Jesus Christ. "Woe to the world on account of scandals," says our Lord; "woe to the man by whom scandal cometh." (Matt. xviii. 7.) And again, He says, addressing the Pharisees: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you go not in yourselves, and those that are going in you suffer not to enter." (Matt. xxiii. 13.) St. Chrysostom writes that the Lord is more inclined to show mercy to them who commit other more grievous sins, than to those who are guilty of the sin of scandal. Ah! dear children, think, and think often, of the great injury you do to another when you draw him into sin, either by words or deeds, persuasion or "bad example." Often reflect on the grievousness of this sin; and pray to God for all those whose fall you have occasioned by your scandal. Henceforward edify all those whom you have before *scandalized*. Let your good example incite them to the practice of virtue and piety, that you may make satisfaction for the injury you have done, and appease the anger of God.

23. "Not to ask pardon of those whom we have offended" is, in the last place, "forbidden by the fifth Commandment." If it should happen, dear children,

that we have quarrelled with any one, and made use of provoking and insulting language towards him, we are guilty of a violation of the fifth Commandment, if we do not make some sort of reparation for the offence we have committed. If our neighbour has suffered at our hands contempt, insult, and ridicule—if we have addressed him in opprobrious terms, and exposed him to the derision of others, we should humbly acknowledge our fault, express regret for what we have done, excuse ourselves mildly, and beg his pardon for the offence offered him. Act in this manner towards all those you have in any way offended, and a speedy reconciliation will be effected between you and them, and litigations and lawsuits will be avoided.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

CAIN A WILFUL MURDERER.

Adam and Eve had two sons, the first was called Cain and the second was called Abel. Cain employed his time in working and tilling the ground. Abel performed the duties of a shepherd. Both being instructed in the duties of religion, they worshipped the Supreme Being by religious sacrifice. Abel offered to God the best and fattest of his flocks; Cain presented Him with the first-fruits and gifts of the earth. But as their offerings were made with different dispositions of the heart, so very different likewise was the acceptance they found in the divine sight. The piety of Abel rendered his offerings agreeable to God; but the impiety and envy of Cain estranged from him the heart of God. It stung Cain to the very quick to see the preference given to his brother—his countenance fell, and a discontented gloom expressed the rancour of his heart. The piety of Abel stirred up his envy into a most violent hatred. God Himself was pleased to speak in order to gain the heart of that wretched man. He asked him why he let himself be carried away by passion, why he was cast down, and why he fretted at what did not concern him. Thou art accountable only for thy own actions, said God to him, whether good or evil. If they are good,

thou shalt have thy reward; but if evil, thou alone must bear the guilt of thy sin. But the admonition was of no avail. One day Cain invited his harmless and unsuspecting brother to walk out with him into the field. When they had walked some distance, Cain violently attacked Abel, and slew him on the spot. This wicked crime armed the divine justice, and the way in which it had been punished points out to men, that there is a Providence which watches over them, to punish vice and avenge virtue. Cain, what is become of your brother Abel? said God to him. But Cain insolently answered, that he did not know, neither was he his brother's keeper. And God told him in reply, that the blood of his brother Abel cried to heaven for vengeance against him; that he should therefore be accursed upon the earth; that, sullied with a brother's blood, he should shun the society of men, and live a vagabond all the days of his life. Cain, seized by the most cutting remorse, and agitated every moment by fear and dread, took flight. However, God gave him time to enter into himself, for He prohibited any one from killing him. "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, that whosoever found him should not kill him."—*Genesis.*

THE MURDERER PARDONED.

A noble lady of Gaeta, in Italy, whose son had been cruelly murdered, is worthy of being cited as an example of Christian forgiveness. As soon as the magistrates were informed of the crime that had been perpetrated, they caused all the gates of the town to be shut, and gave every necessary order to prevent the escape of the murderer. The wretched criminal, terrified at the thought of the dreadful punishment which awaited him if he were taken, sought in vain for some safe place of concealment. But the only spot, as it occurred to him, in which he could hope to escape detection, was the house of his victim, and thither he betook himself for refuge. The mother of the murdered man was living in it, and received at one and the same time the sad intelligence of her son's death, and information that his assassin was in her power. But under her own roof she felt bound to aid him, and caused him to be conveyed to a place of concealment within the house. Some time after she sent for him, and reproached him gently for his crime; but assured him of her forgiveness, and even provided him with money to assist him in his flight, and to enable him to escape pursuit.

BERANGARIUS, DYING, TREMBLES FOR THE SIN OF SCANDAL GIVEN BY HIM.

Berangarius denied the real presence of Jesus Christ in the blessed Sacrament, and he brought many other persons into his error. When he was on his deathbed, as we are told by blessed Leonard, he was seized with a great fear. The priest who assisted him in his last passage, tried to encourage him. What was his answer? "I am about," he said, "to go before the judgment-seat of Christ; I will tell you that for my own sins I hope for pardon; but for the sins I have made others commit, I fear I shall not be pardoned. I fear I shall be damned, for I do not know how to repair the damage I have done."

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What explanation do you give of the fifth Commandment?
2. How do you make it appear that murder is a very grievous sin?
3. Are there different grades in killing, or is one greater than another?
4. Is abortion a grievous and crying sin?
5. Why is quarrelling strictly forbidden by the fifth Commandment?
6. What is to be thought of the prevailing practice of fighting?
7. How do you show that hatred is a grievous sin?
8. Is anger the source of many other sins?
9. What evil effects are produced by anger?
10. Shall the sin of anger exclude us from the kingdom of heaven?
11. How do you prove that God detests revenge?
12. If we pardon not others, will God pardon us?
13. What are the circumstances in which a person can be lawfully put to death?
14. Is self-murder a very heinous crime?
15. Is speaking to others in insulting language forbidden by the fifth Commandment?
16. What do you mean by scandal, and how is it divided?
17. What is scandal of the weak, and by whom is it condemned?
18. Should we avoid doing even a lawful act, if scandal were to follow from it?
19. What do you mean by pharisaical scandal?

20. In how many ways may malicious scandal be committed?
21. Why is scandal so severely condemned by God?
22. How is scandal very injurious to Jesus Christ?
23. How should we act towards a person whom we have offended?

PRACTICE.

1. Never quarrel with others, whatever provocation they may give you?
2. Avoid carefully everything that you know from experience will excite anger and hatred in your breast.
3. Be watchful of your words and actions, that you may never say or do anything which may scandalize your neighbour.

PRAYER.

O God of charity! we have now been taught how detestable hatred and revenge are in Thy sight. We acknowledge with grief of heart that we have but too often been guilty of fighting and of entertaining anger against our neighbours, but henceforward we shall pardon whatever offences we may receive, and suppress every desire of revenge. We shall cultivate peace and harmony with each other, check every rising passion, and show forth in our lives meekness, mildness, and brotherly love. We promise Thee that we shall never more be guilty of scandal, but shall edify each other by the regularity of our lives. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ON THE DIFFERENT SPECIES OF IMPURITY.

Q. Say the sixth Commandment.
A. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

1. We are now come, dear children, to speak of the sin of impurity, the greatest and most powerful obstacle

to our salvation, and the most filthy vice of which we can be guilty. The words of the "sixth Commandment" are: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." By adultery is understood every sort of carnal sin. The Scripture mentions several kinds, which may be reduced to five species, namely, fornication, adultery, sacrilege, incest, and sins against nature. "Adultery" is that sin of impurity which is committed by persons, both or one of the parties being married. The crime of adultery is much greater than that of fornication, for it contains, besides the vile sin of impurity, that of infidelity—a breach of that solemn promise made to one another at their marriage by husband and wife.

Q. What is forbidden by the sixth Commandment?

A. All unchaste freedoms with another's wife or husband.

2. In the first place, "the sixth Commandment" forbids all improper familiarities and "unchaste freedoms" with the wife or husband of another. If one be guilty of those "unchaste freedoms with another's wife or husband," he or she commits a sin far more grievous than if one or the other had been guilty of "unchaste freedoms" with one not married. Though the wife, who commits adultery, is guilty of infidelity and injustice equally as an adulterous husband; yet, as St. Augustin observes, the sin is greater in the man than in the woman, and for several reasons. *First*, because the man is the head and chief, and on that account ought to give good example, and do nothing that he may have cause to fear his wife should imitate. *Secondly*, because being a man, he ought more manfully resist temptations, and conquer his passions. *Thirdly*, being a man, his reason is stronger and his judgment more solid, and on that account he ought to be more sensible of the grievous-

ness of the sin, and avoid it more carefully. *Fourthly*, being a man, he ought to be ashamed to be outdone in virtue by a woman.

Q. What else is forbidden by the sixth Commandment?

A. All immodest looks, words, or actions, and everything contrary to chastity. (Coloss. iii. 5.)

3. "All immodest looks" are forbidden by the sixth Commandment. The senses are the avenues or gates of the soul, and on that account we must carefully keep them closed against everything impure. We should especially have a guard over our eyes, because it is through the eyes that sinful objects seek to introduce themselves into the soul; for the sight is the quickest of all the senses, and makes, of all others, the most sudden, the deepest, and the strongest impression upon the heart. Innumerable souls have perished by one single glance of the eye. "Gaze not upon a maiden," says the wise man, "lest her beauty be a stumbling-block to thee." (Eccl. ix. 5.) And Christ declares: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt. v. 28.) Upon which words, St. Chrysostom, preaching on the crime of assisting at stage entertainments, spoke thus to his flock: "But you will say, what, if I do not look to lust? And how will you be able to persuade me this? For he who will not refrain from a look, how will he be able to remain free from a wound in the soul? Is your body a stone? Is it iron? You are encompassed with flesh; I say, with human flesh, which is more easily kindled from concupiscence than straw catches the flame. Are you more virtuous and strong than so many great and stout men, who have perished by a single cast of the eye?" You should never, dear children, stop to look at immodest statues or pictures, or at any persons who

may be immodestly dressed; for if you do, you will soon find that evil thoughts will arise in your minds. Whenever it may happen that your eyes encounter naked statues or pictures, turn them aside immediately, and have recourse to God by prayer, that you may not enter into temptation. We read in the life of St. Louis Gonzaga, that he never looked at females; even in speaking to his mother, he kept his eyes cast down upon the ground.

4. "Immodest words" are also strictly forbidden by the sixth Commandment. Of all the artifices which the devil makes use of to destroy souls, there is not one more effectual than "immodest words" and impure discourses. Thousands of souls have been damned by immodest and impure discourses. And yet, alas! we pronounce them daily and hourly without dread or the fear of God. Some there are who fix no limits to this diabolical language, but allow the most filthy and obscene expressions to issue from their lips, to the great ruin of children, and of all those who hear them. Others there are who distil this poison more covertly, and, consequently, more effectually; and they are those who speak words of double meaning. St. John Chrysostom calls both one and the other *the tongues of the devil.* And so they are. As God has His apostles and His preachers, who are called *men of God,* the devil has his apostles and preachers, who do his work by means of the foul and filthy language they speak. Some may say that they have no bad intention when they speak these words, and that they make use of them only to amuse others. You have no bad intention! Think you, that you will be excused on that account? St. Paul tells us that no improper word should ever proceed from our mouth: "But now lay you also all away . . . . . filthy speech out of your mouth." (Coloss. iii. 8.) When very young, St. Bernardine of Sienna used to blush as often as he heard an immodest word; hence,

his companions were careful never to use improper language in his presence. Such was the horror which St. Stanislaus felt at obscene conversation, that on hearing an immodest word he swooned away, and lost the use of his senses.

5. But you may say that you speak such words only to amuse your companions. Amusement! Ah! dear children, can obscene words and filthy speech be an amusement to a Christian, whose conversation, as St. Paul says, should be in heaven? Should the tongue, on which the body of Jesus Christ has so often reposed, be the vehicle of obscene discourses? You wish to amuse yourselves in outraging the God of holiness! Amuse yourselves! But recollect, if you repent not, that God will one day *laugh and mock* at you in turn, when you must appear before His tribunal, to be judged and condemned to eternal flames for your filthy and obscene language: "I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock." (Prov. i. 26.) Oh! how great is the evil caused by immodest language! One obscene word may be the cause of the perdition of all who hear it. Many examples, says St. John Chrysostom, can be counted of young boys and young girls, who, from being angels of purity and innocence, became devils by listening to immodest words! Never, then, dear children, pronounce immodest words or words of double meaning; for by so doing you shall sully the purity of your own souls, and wound by your scandal the souls of those who listen to you.

6. "Immodest actions" are, in the third place, forbidden by the sixth Commandment. "Immodest actions" comprise *adultery*, *fornication*, *sacrilege*, *incest*, impure *touches* and *kisses*, and other sins, which St. Paul tells us we should not even name. *Adultery* is, as we have already said, when a married man has criminal intercourse with a married or unmarried woman; or when an unmarried man has criminal intercourse with a married woman. *Fornication* is that sin which is

committed when both the man and the woman are single, unmarried, and at their own disposal—out of their parents' or guardians' care. This sin is very grievous in the sight of God, and very infamous in the eyes of the world, bringing ruin on the souls and on the reputation of those who are guilty of it. "But fornication and all uncleanness," says St. Paul to the Ephesians, "let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints." (Eph. v. 3.) This sin is greater if the virgin be under her parents' care, or if she be forced against her will to commit such a wicked act.

7. *Sacrilege* is that sin of impurity which is committed by persons who have made a vow of chastity either solemnly or privately, or which is committed in a place consecrated to the worship of God. The peculiar malice of this sin consists in the abuse of what is sacred and devoted to God; for by the solemn or private vow of chastity which persons make, they consecrate the purity of their souls and bodies to God. But if after such an engagement, they prove unfaithful to the promise they have made, they abuse and defile what is consecrated to God; and in this they commit a great crime over and above that of impurity. *Incest* is another species of impurity, and is that which is committed by persons who are within the four forbidden degrees of either consanguinity or affinity; and the nearer the kindred or relationship, the greater the crime.

8. These, and one or two other abominable crimes, are *complete* species of the vice of impurity; but all imperfect acts, whether thoughts, words, looks, kisses, or touches, are mortal sins, and belong to that species to which they imperfectly tend. *Kisses, touches* of the hand, and the like liberties, with danger of impure delight, are strictly "forbidden by the sixth Commandment." Kisses and touches of the hand are extremely dangerous, and among adult young persons, at least, if

frequent or long-continued, are always mortal sins. St. Basil compares them to red-hot iron, the touch of which cannot but raise blisters on the flesh.

9. "And everything contrary to chastity" is forbidden by the sixth Commandment. *Intemperance* in eating or drinking is forbidden; for it is impossible to preserve chastity, especially in youth, if persons be not temperate and abstemious. The heat of blood which boils up in that age, excites them very much to sensual pleasures; but when it is assisted by exterior causes, as spirituous liquors and good cheer, it blazes out. St. Jerome, in his epistle to Furia, says, that "Mount Etna, and Mount Vesuvius, and Mount Olympus, which so often exhale fire and flames, do not burn with greater heat than the marrow of young people, when they are inflamed with wine and delicious meat."

10. Frequent interviews or familiar conversation with persons of another sex, is "contrary to chastity," and extremely dangerous. It is during these interviews, dear children, that the virtue of young persons is utterly lost; and often, after it has been preserved from other dangers, it is then deplorably shipwrecked. Impure love enters but too easily into young minds; but when it is assisted by the presence of the object, it is inflamed beyond all imagination. For this reason the wise man gives us this important admonition: "I found a woman to be more bitter than death; she is the huntsman's noose, her heart is a net, her hands are fetters; the man who loves God will escape her." (Ecclus. vii. 27.) The holy Fathers often repeat this lesson, and in the strongest language denounce indiscreet familiarities with women. "Trust not to thy former success," says St. Jerome, in his epistle to Nepotian, "for thou art neither stronger than Samson, nor more holy than David, nor wiser than Solomon. Never forget that a woman banished the first man from paradise. Never be alone with a woman." Indiscreet freedoms, caresses, and

demonstrations of friendship, and other such-like fondness, too common among young persons, are most destructive of virtue and purity, and are, as St. Jerome calls them, "the forerunners of the approaching ruin of chastity." Carefully avoid, then, dear children, all these things, so "contrary to chastity," for they are the most ordinary causes of impurity. Fly them as the plague of your souls, if you desire to be freed from their pernicious consequences—the certain ruin of the purity of your souls.

Q. Are immodest songs, discourses, novels, comedies, and plays, *especially at wakes*, forbidden by the sixth Commandment?

A. Yes; and it is sinful to join in them, to encourage them, or to be present at them.

11. "Immodest songs and discourses" are forbidden by the sixth Commandment. Of "immodest discourses" and words we have already spoken, and have shown the great injury they cause to the souls both of those who speak them and of those who listen to them. "Immodest songs" are even more dangerous than immodest words, for they kindle more promptly in the heart the fire of impure love. Many there are whose lives were pure and innocent, until, hearing impure songs, they took the fatal resolution of committing impurity, and soon fell from one abyss of crime into another! We every day witness the frightful consequences of "immodest songs." What is the ordinary subject of these songs? Is it not illicit love or gallantry? Do we not find in the greater number of these "immodest songs," expressions, if not openly obscene, at least covertly so—protestations of sensual love and the like. But are not songs of this nature highly calculated to excite wicked and impure thoughts? The Fathers of the Church have written in the strongest language against "immodest

songs." St. Clement of Alexandria says that we should never take a part in those profane love songs, but leave such obscene productions to drunkards and immoral women.

12. "All immodest novels" are, too, contrary to the sixth Commandment. By *novels* are meant those books which treat of extraordinary and fictitious adventures, and which are in most cases filled with stories of sensual love. There are many of these works openly obscene, but the greater number have their poison concealed under a fair and modest exterior. They are not openly lewd, but they are more dangerous on that account, because *novels* openly obscene, as they professedly teach wickedness, easily create an aversion to them in those souls which have yet some shame and conscience; but the covertly immodest *novels*, not seeming to be directly bad, attract the mind by their fair discourses; and, by the agreeableness of the subject, delight the senses and inflame the heart with impure love.

13. Avoid all such *novels* and books, dear children, as inventions which the devil has found out to destroy you. Bad books, like bad company, are the ruin of young persons. Bad books are the poison of the soul. You can scarcely ever read them without a mortal sin. In every country on the earth there are thousands of young people daily and hourly perishing under the horrible, the frightful curse of bad books and "immodest novels." When a passion for *novel* and romance reading has gained on young persons, business and everything else serious are neglected, and the mind becomes poisoned with impure, filthy images. See what bad *novels* did for St. Teresa, who was, even in her childhood, a saint. "It happened," she says, "that there were some novels and romances in our house. I began to read them, and I gave myself up entirely to this reading. Then I forgot my duties, and thought only of these novels, and I fell into many sins." If you have any of these *novels* or

tales, keep them not. Do not rest content with a resolution not to read them, but part with them at once, for if you do not, curiosity will tempt you and overcome you at the end. Say not that these novels are well composed, that they are beautifully written, and that from reading them you learn to speak well, and obtain a great deal of information. I shall answer you in the words of St. Augustin, that "all this is but a false pretext by which you deceive yourself, for by these wicked books we learn not to speak well, but only to become wicked and commit vice with less restraint." (Book II. Confessions.)

14. "Immodest comedies" are also forbidden by the sixth Commandment. "Comedies" and other representations of that sort are extremely dangerous, because vice is often represented in such plays in the most seductive form, while virtue is often held up in the most odious colours. In "comedies" and plays there is invariably something that is hurtful to modesty, either in the sentiments spoken, or in the dress and attitudes of the players. Many a soul has been ruined by attending at theatres, for in those places it was that their virtue was shaken for the first time, and those who knew not vice before, after they had visited the theatres and beheld immodest comedies represented, became profligate and debauched. "It is at plays," says St. Jerome, "that we see fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremias: *Death enters through the windows of our soul,*" that is, through the eyes and ears.

15. The Church has ever exhorted her children to keep away from plays, and has exerted herself in every way to turn them aside from such exhibitions. St. Augustin relates that a certain lady having gone into the theatre, was immediately possessed by the devil. The devil was commanded, in the name of Jesus Christ, to say why he had entered that person, since she was a Christian. He answered that the theatre was his house,

and since she came of her own accord into his house, he had a right to come into her. Of all theatrical representations, the *opera* is perhaps the most dangerous. It is dangerous to morality, not certainly on account of the music and singing, but on account of the dresses and acting of the singers, and particularly on account of the *ballets* which take place either at the conclusion of the *opera* or between the acts.

16. "Immodest plays, especially at wakes," are condemned by the sixth Commandment. These plays "at wakes" are not only against the law of God, but are contrary to the laws of humanity. For it is not only a scandal to religion, but it is also a stain and blot on human nature, that when the soul of a person has but just departed from the body, and gone to its last account before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, there should be introduced in the room where the dead body is lying drinking and dancing, and mock marriages; and that acts shameful and disgraceful should be allowed to go on during the night. At these "wakes" the most obscene songs are sung, and the most filthy expressions are used. There the young are taught, for the first time, the ways of crime and sin; for many who entered a *wake*-house pure and innocent, have departed from it with sullied lips and guilty hearts. So alarming and frightful are the consequences of sitting up at *wakes* at night, that in some parts of Ireland all persons, except the relatives and particular friends of the deceased, are strictly prohibited from attending them.

Q. Is there anything else forbidden by the sixth Commandment?
A. Yes; immodest dances, balls, and dresses.

17. *Dancing* means movements of the body and limbs, regulated by the sounds of musical instruments or those of the voice. A *ball* means an assembly of persons of both sexes which takes place at night for the purpose of *dancing;* what we have to say of *dancing* can also be

applied to *balls*. "Although *balls* and *dancing*," says St. Francis de Sales, "be recreations in their own nature indifferent, yet, according to the ordinary manner in which they are conducted, they tend very much to evil, and are very dangerous in their consequences. Being generally carried on at night, it is by no means surprising that they should be attended with many sinful circumstances. Each one strives who shall carry most vanity to the *ball* or *dance ;* and as vanity but too often leads to evil affections and to indiscreet familiarities, both are consequent on *dancing*."

18. There are some *dances* which are absolutely condemned, and in which we can take no part without being guilty of sin. These objectionable *dances* are called *waltzes, galops, polkas*. These dances are of themselves bad, from the bearing and the attitudes of the persons engaged in them. They have been always condemned by the pastors of the Church. Religion will not suffer them, and from every well-regulated society they should be banished. It is, indeed, a matter of no little surprise, that any woman who wishes to maintain a character for virtue and modesty should ever take part in such *dances*.

19. Ordinary dancing *parties*, which take place in towns and villages at night, are, too, most injurious to the morals of those who meet at them. These *parties* may be called schools of the devil, for it is at such places that he makes a havoc of souls. Impurity in words and acts prevails at these parties, and the virtue of many young females has been ruined by their frequenting such places of amusement. If young persons go to these dancing houses, they will soon become wicked and immoral, and will soon lose altogether the fear of God. "Where there is dancing," says St. Ephrem, "there is the devil's festival kept." "*Balls* and *dancing*, and other nightly meetings," says St. Francis de Sales, "ordinarily attract the reigning vices

and sins together—namely, quarrels, envy, scoffing, and wanton loves. And as these exercises open the pores of the bodies of those that use them, so they also open the pores of their hearts, and expose them to the danger of some serpent who takes advantage to breathe some loose words or lascivious suggestions into the ear, or of some basilisk who casts an impure look or wanton glance of love into the heart, which being thus opened, is easily seized upon and poisoned.*

20. *Immodest dressing* is a violation of the sixth Commandment. When young females dress immodestly they are guilty of scandal, for they cause the ruin of many souls. Tertullian, in speaking of women who dress immodestly, says: "You are at the devil's gate; you are a deserter from the flock of Christ. You ruined those whom the devil dared not attack; you have seduced man, the image of God. Such are the effects of your meretricious attire."† Theologians condemn, as guilty of mortal sins, young women who go with their breasts bare, and necks all naked, or covered so slightly that they only invite bolder glances, and wound hearts more dangerously. Of such light handkerchiefs or coverings, St. Jerome writes, "that by them the body is clothed to be made more naked." (Ep. ad Lætam.) And if such be the custom of any country, St. Antoninus says of it, "such a fashion is shameful and immodest, and must not be followed."

21. "A lady of high rank," says St. Jerome, "married to Hymentius, the uncle of the virgin Eustochium, was prevailed upon to dress her hair and put on her richest attire to conquer the virgin's virtue and the mother's care, when behold, that very night she was visited by an angel, threatening her in angry terms: Hadst thou the imprudence to prefer thy husband's desire to the law of Christ? Were thy sacrilegious hands employed to lay snares for the virgin? Those hands

* Introduction to a Devout Life † De Cultu Feminarum.

shall now wither, and thou shalt be taught by excruciating pains the heinousness of thy crime. Five months were scarcely elapsed when she made a miserable end, and sunk into hell flames."—*St. Jerome*, L. 2, Ep. 7.

22. In his "Introduction to a Devout Life," St. Francis de Sales gives the following advice with regard to the manner in which young persons should dress: "Be neat, *Philothea;* let nothing hang loose about you, or be ill put on; but then avoid all affectation, vanity, curiosity, or levity in your dress; keep yourself always, as much as possible, on the side of plainness and modesty, which, without doubt, is the greatest ornament of beauty, and the best excuse for the want of it. For my part, I would have my devout people, whether men or women, the best clad of the company, but the least pompous and affected. I would have them adorned with gracefulness, decency, and dignity. St. Louis says, in one word, that each one should dress according to his condition and state."

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE DEATH OF THE IMPURE CHRYSOARIUS.

St. Gregory, in his Dialogues, relates that there was a man in his time, named Chrysoarius, a man of quality and very rich, yet as full of vices as he was wealthy in riches, but, above all, extremely addicted to the sin of impurity. God willed to put a period to the sins of this man, which he daily heaped one upon another, and sent him a severe sickness, of which he died, but in a very extraordinary manner. Approaching his last end, he suddenly perceived a multitude of evil spirits, who presented themselves to him in hideous forms, and made a show as if they would immediately carry him into hell. He began to tremble, look aghast, and mournfully cry out for help. He turns himself on every side to avoid the sight of these horrid shapes, but which way soever he moves they are continually before his eyes. After many a struggle, feeling himself surrounded and

violently seized by those wicked spirits, he began horribly to cry out: *Truce till morning—truce till morning!* and shrieking thus, his soul was torn from his body, and he died miserably without obtaining the truce he required.

THE CONSEQENCES OF READING BAD BOOKS.

A boy had heard of a certain bad book. A wicked companion had told him of it, and said he would learn a great deal by reading it. This boy happened to see the book offered for sale, and bought it. He read it. The reading of this book made him a thoroughly bad boy. He no more said his prayers or went to chapel. He frequented the most wicked company he could find. He went from bad to worse. He lost his faith, and said that he believed there was no God. Ps. xiii.: "The wicked hath said in his heart, There is no God." He died in despair, cursing most frightfully the boy who had told him of the book which ruined him. The mischief of that bad book did not stop with his death. He had lent it to others to read. Many of those to whom he had lent it became bad themselves, and ruined others; and where the evil of this one book stopped, or whether it ever stopped at all, God only knows.

THE DANCING-HOUSE MARRIAGE.

"There is lying in this grave," said a sexton to a missionary, pointing out the grave of one lately buried, "a young woman, about eighteen years of age. She had a practice of going to the dancing-houses. One evening in the dancing-house she picked up with a Protestant young man; they danced and talked with one another. The time passed on, and it was getting late. The Protestant young man asked her if she would marry him. She was silent for a few moments. She remembered very well she had often heard the priest say it is a very bad thing for Catholics to marry Protestants, or those of any other religion—that God does not bless these marriages. No matter, she answered 'Yes'—she promised to marry him. They do not think about these things in dancing-houses. Before the marriage the young man made many fine promises; how she should go to Mass every Sunday, and he would go with her, and the children should be christened by the priest, and brought up Catholics, and very likely, he said, he would become a Catholic himself. This marriage took place—a dancing-house marriage! She was married to the Protestant young man. It was a bright sunshiny morning, the morning of the marriage, but there were dark clouds not very

far off. The Protestant young man behaved pretty well to her for a few months. At last the dark cloud came. The Protestant young man came home one day to his dinner. He sat down at the table and began to eat. The meat was not to his liking. There was a sulky anger on his face. At length he stood up on his feet, holding the knife clenched in his hand, fury and rage flashing from his eyes. He cursed his wife and said: 'You Popish beast I will stick you with this knife, and take every drop of Popish blood out of you!' The wife turned deadly pale; she fell off the chair; her senses were gone with the fright. She recovered her senses again, but it was only to live for a day or two. She died of the shock which the fright had given her! And now, your reverence," said the sexton, "she lies buried under this wall, where the ivy grows, and it is just a year since she was buried. So ended the dancing-house marriage."

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What do you mean by the sin of adultery?
2. Is this crime of adultery a most grievous sin?
3. Why are immodest looks so severely condemned?
4. Are immodest words and discourses strictly forbidden by God?
5. Are immodest words sinful if they be said only for amusement?
6. What do you understand by the two first species of impurity?
7. What is sacrilege and what incest?
8. Mention the remaining species of impurity, both perfect and imperfect?
9. Is intemperance contrary to chastity?
10. Is there anything else contrary to chastity?
11. Why are immodest songs so strictly forbidden by God?
12. What do you mean by immodest novels?
13. What evil effects flow from reading bad novels?
14. Why are comedies so very dangerous to morals?
15. Has the Church been always opposed to theatrical representations?
16. What do you think of plays at wakes?
17. Are dances and balls incentives to impurity?
18. What dances in particular are condemned?
19. What is to be said of dancing parties at night?
20. Do females sin by dressing themselves immodestly?
21. Relate what St. Jerome says of the danger of inducing others to commit impurity?
22. What says St. Francis de Sales on dressing?

PRACTICE.

1. Ever hold in the greatest abhorrence the vice of impurity, whether in thought, word, or action.

2. Have a continual watch over your senses, that your eyes may not look on anything that is immodest, nor your tongue give utterance to obscenity.

3. Form the resolution of never reading a bad book, and also of keeping away from dances and wakes.

PRAYER.

O Jesus! we have now been taught how vile and abominable the vile sin of impurity is in Thy eyes. We have seen the various ways in which it may be committed. If we have ever transgressed against holy purity in thought, word, or action, we now, dear Lord, crave pardon for our offences. Knowing what a great evil to our souls it would be to fall into that vile sin, we this day form the resolution of keeping away from dancing-houses and parties of pleasure, for they are the fruitful sources of that detestable crime. Grant, O Lord! that we may never again defile our souls and bodies by impure acts and thoughts, but that, as they are both Thine, sanctity and purity may evermore dwell in them. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ON THE ENORMITY OF IMPURITY.

Q. Is lust or impurity a very grievous sin?

A. Yes; it is of its own nature a most grievous sin, in all its different kinds and degrees.

1. Impurity is a very grievous sin, because it is a great injury offered to God, an outrage against Jesus Christ, and a great wrong done to our own body. (1.) It is a grievous injury offered to God, because it pollutes His temple and the sanctuary of the Holy Ghost, that

is, ourselves, according to those words of the Apostle: "Do ye not know that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in ye? But if any man violate the temple of God, him God shall destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which you are." (1 Cor. iii. 16.) We abhor Antiochus for polluting the Temple, and we hold in detestation Baltassar for profaning the sacred vessels, and we are not surprised at their being so severely punished by God for their grievous sacrileges; but yet these impious wretches profaned only God's material temple. But by the sin of impurity a man, according to St. Paul, poilutes God's living temple in himself. If, says St. Cæsarius, we are offended at the thought of seeing the material temple of God turned into a hog-sty, or filled with dirt and rubbish, what must we think of ourselves if, in the living temple of God, we admit unclean and filthy thoughts?

2. (2.) Impurity is an injury to Jesus Christ, because it pollutes His members, which are our bodies. "Know ye not," says St. Paul, "that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I, then, take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid . . . . . or know you not that he who is joined to a harlot is made one body?" (1 Cor. vi. 15.)

3. (3.) Impurity is an injury done to ourselves, for by it a man defiles and sins against his own body. The nearer and dearer this body ought to be to him, the greater the purity and sanctity with which he is bound to adorn it, and the more grievous the impurity with which he defiles it. "Every sin," says the Apostle, "that a man doeth, is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." (1 Cor. vi. 18.) Impurity, then, being a sin which a man commits against his own body, is more grievous than other sins, such as stealing and the like, because a man's body is more valuable to him than riches or honours, or anything external to him. And the Apostle

shows wherein this sin against our body consists. "Know you not," he says, "that your members are the temples of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God? And you are not your own, for you are bought with a great price." (1 Cor. vi. 19.) As, therefore, our bodies are not our own, but belong to God, who has bought them with a great price, and intends them for His dwelling-place, it is a grievous injury done them to pervert them from so noble a use, by defiling them with impurity.

4. Moreover, on another account, the sin of impurity is very grievous. It effaces the image of God in man in the most horrible and outrageous manner. God has been pleased to make us to His own image and likeness; He has given us a spiritual and immortal soul, endowed with reason, and a pure spirit like Himself. But man, by impurity, strips his soul of this high and exalted dignity. "Do you reflect," says St. John Chrysostom, "whose image you have defiled, to whom you have offered the affront?" Shall a soul, created to fill a throne, debase herself to the condition of a swine, and wallow in the mire?

Q. Is there anything else which can prove the great enormity of impurity?

A. Yes; it can be proved from the punishment inflicted by God on those who were guilty of it.

5. There is no crime, dear children, that God has punished with such severity as the crime of impurity. But if we see that God—a God of justice and mercy—punishes any one particular sin in a most signal and dreadful manner, that particular sin must be peculiarly abominable in itself and detestable in His eyes; for being a God of justice, He can never punish a sin more than it deserves; and being a God of mercy, He punishes sin less than it deserves. Now, by looking over the Scriptures, we shall find that there is no sin which God

punishes so severely as that of impurity, and no sin against which He threatens such severe penalties in the world to come.

6. The first remarkable punishment we find in looking over the Scriptures is that of the deluge. About 1650 years after the creation, Almighty God buried under water every living person and every living thing, both birds and beasts, except four men and four women, and a few beasts, and a few fishes of the sea. These were secured in the ark, but all the rest of the world perished in the water. The sea came roaring in over the land; the floodgates of heaven were opened over the earth, and the rain came pouring down for forty days and for forty nights without for a moment ceasing, until the highest mountains and tallest trees were covered. Thus perished the whole race of man, made to the image of God, in order to serve Him here, and to enjoy Him after in heaven. What caused this calamity? What drew down this universal judgment upon them? The sins of impurity, for "the earth was corrupted before God, and defiled with wickedness."

7. To express His abhorrence of these abominations, the Scripture says that God "repented that He had made man upon the earth; and being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, He said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; from man even to beasts, and from creeping things even to the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them." (Gen. vi. 6.) What a strange expression from Almighty God! "It repenteth Me that I have made them!" Is there any expression that could more forcibly convey the hatred and horror in which God held the sin of impurity? When the angels rebelled in heaven, and when our first parents transgressed God's command in paradise, God certainly punished them, and severely punished them; but He does not say that He *repented* creating them. We are not told that He *repented* creat-

ing man, when Cain murdered his brother Abel. No; but when the sin of impurity forced its way into the world, when the earth was defiled with the wickedness of that sin, then *it repenteth Him that He had made man;* then He swept him off the face of the earth, that he should no longer exhibit a sight enough to draw tears of blood, if it were possible, even from angels.

8. One should think that this general and severe punishment should have been a warning to the small remains of the world who were saved in the ark, and that they should have left such impressions of it on the minds of their descendants, as to prevent them from ever again provoking the Almighty by such wickedness. But, alas! all the water of the deluge was not enough to extinguish the fire of lust, for as the world increased in numbers, it increased again in wickedness. The same hateful, filthy crimes again sprung up with more malignant luxuriance. The impurities of Sodom and Gomorrha cried aloud to heaven for vengeance. God heard the cry. The God of purity could no longer bear with such provoking crimes. What does He? Pour down on them another deluge? No; He resolved on a more frightful judgment than that of the flood. A greater terror must be struck into their minds; they must receive a more lively sense of the enormity of their sins. Floods of water, as before, will not be enough, but floods of fire are necessary. And floods of fire and brimstone He showers down on them, and in a single moment He reduces to ashes Sodom and Gomorrha, and the towns and country around, and the buildings and everything that grew on the ground. And the country which was before like the paradise of God, was turned into a lake of filthy water called the Dead Sea, which to this day stands an eternal monument of the great hatred which God bears to the sin of impurity.

9. When Onias committed a sin of lust, by which he defiled the marriage bed, he was immediately struck

dead, "because," says the Scripture, "he had done a detestable thing." When the king of Moab sent a number of beautiful women into the camp of the people of Israel to seduce them, and the people had sinned with them; Almighty God was so enraged at their crime, that by His express command no less than twenty-four thousand were put to death, in order to expiate their offence, as we read in the book of Numbers.

Q. Does the enormity of impurity appear from its effects?
A. Yes; for its effects are many and deplorable.

10. *Firstly*, impurity cause a blindness of the understanding, and insensibility with regard to the judgments of God. Experience shows this so plainly, that we need not seek for any other proof. We see many young people, who have very good inclinations, an aversion to evil, a great affection to piety, and the fear of God strongly imprinted on their souls. Now, all these good qualities remain if the sin of impurity does not take possession of their heart; but once this hellish monster gets admittance it subverts them all. It creeps in first by immodest thoughts—the thoughts produce the desire of carnal pleasures—the desire moves to unchaste actions—these impure actions repeated and multiplied ruin all the good inclinations of the soul. Things now appear far otherwise than they did before. The sin of impurity now seems no more so great. It appears no longer enormous, because it is familiar; and he who before could not rest one night after having committed one mortal sin, can now sleep many nights without the least disquiet, after having committed hundreds and thousands of them. Good God! what a change! What havoc impurity makes in the soul!

11. *Secondly*, impurity produces a coldness and aversion to God and everything that is good. It is hardly to be conceived how those who are infected with this

vice of impurity have an aversion to what regards their salvation. Prayer is tedious—the sacraments contemptible—reading of pious books is insupportable. The word of God, that was once the food of their souls, now makes no impression upon them—the most terrible truths of eternity are disregarded. Before this sin had infected the soul, one found a delight in prayer, and never omitted it morning or night—if an opportunity offered, attended at Mass on the mornings during the week—attended on Sundays at vespers and benediction of the most blessed Sacrament—read occasionally some good books. But this sin once indulged, the heart is corrupted, the will perverted, the mind is stupified, the imagination is sullied, the senses infected, the body defiled, and the image of God defaced—no longer a taste for prayer—no longer a wish to hear anything instructive—no piety for approaching the sacraments—no desire to assist at Mass. "The sensual man," says St. Paul, "perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

12. *Thirdly*, impurity produces pride, which makes young people despise all admonitions, resist all remonstrances, and scoff and sneer at the most wholesome counsels; so that, as this sin renders youth soft and pliable to vice, it makes them deaf to advice concerning their salvation. We need no other example of this truth than that of St. Augustin. In the second book of his Confessions he deplores the insupportable pride with which he contemned the discreet admonitions of his pious mother, to whom, next to God, he owed his salvation.

13. *Fourthly*, impurity hardens the heart in wickedness. In proportion as this sin is indulged, the soul becomes hardened, so that nothing is able to soften her. Those who are addicted to this sin become void of sense or apprehension. They are found insensible to all good admonitions, and deaf to all the inspirations of grace.

The threats of divine justice and the chastisements of heaven seem to them but a dream. The examples of those whom God has so rigorously punished for this sin have no effect upon them. The misfortunes which they see with their own eyes befalling others, make no impression upon their minds. Nothing is able to move or affect them, so fatally has this brutal passion blinded them.

14. *Fifthly*, it frequently leads to many other grievous sins. Thus, it hurried Joseph's mistress to the blackest calumny and oppression of the innocent—David to adultery and murder—Solomon to idolatry—the two Elders to calumny, perjury, and putting the innocent Susannah to death, as far as lay in them. It hurries on many to murder their own children, both soul and body, by procuring abortion, or by killing them when born; and it is one of those sins which the devil makes commonly a handle of to tempt those who fall into it, to conceal it in confession, and by this means to throw them into a pit, out of which it is a miracle if ever they arise.

15. After all these sad effects of impurity, there remains one which fills up the measure of all the former, and to which they all tend; and that sad effect is final impenitence, or spiritual death, which is the height of all misfortunes. It is this detestable sin of impurity which fills hell with innumerable souls, on account of the untimely death it brings on those who are plunged into this vice—some being surprised by a sickness, which deprives them of the time or means of doing penance—others by some frightful accident—others dying in hardness of heart, abandoned by God at the hour of death, as they abandoned Him during their lives. "The Lord," says St. Peter, "knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be tormented with that fire which his justice has prepared for them; and especially them who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness." (2 Peter, ii. 9, 10.) St. Remigius

says, that few Christian adults are saved, and that the rest are damned for sins of impurity: "Few out of the mass of adults are saved, by reason of the sin of lust." And Father Segneri says, that three-fourths of the reprobate are damned for this vice. Is it possible, dear children, that this oracle, pronounced by the Holy Ghost Himself against impurity, and these terrible sayings of the saints, should not strike you with a horror of that detestable sin? We shall speak of immodest thoughts and the occasions of sins of impurity in a subsequent chapter.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE FALL OF SOLOMON ON ACCOUNT OF HIS IMPURE LOVES.

Solomon was the wisest of men, and a great favourite of heaven, until he became the victim of impurity. The heart, which for many years had been the temple of the Holy Ghost, began to be most shamefully polluted by the love of women. Solomon, once the friend and faithful servant of God, fell from one abyss to another. Bereft of his wisdom, he sunk from the depth of lust into the gulf of idolatry. He married no fewer than a thousand wives—wives from Egypt, from the country of Moab, and Ammon—and so blind and violent was his passion for them, that at their request he ordered different temples to be erected to their idols. Astarthe, the goddess of the Sidonians, Chamos, the idol of Moab, and Moloch, the idol of Ammon, not only had their temples, but received worship from Solomon himself. Such criminal conduct drew upon him God's severest indignation. Almighty God appeared to him, and denounced heavy judgments upon him for his crimes. He told him that his kingdom should be divided, and the greater part of it given to his servant Jeroboam. Some time after this denunciation of God, Solomon died in the fifty-ninth year of his age, leaving the world in doubt whether his memory be more worthy of praise or censure, whether he died the friend or enemy of his Creator, the object of His love or hatred. (3 Kings, ii.)

THE SAD END OF A DEBAUCHEE.

John Gerson, Chancellor of Paris, relates the following terrible example, which he took out of Thomas Calapratensic, suffragan bishop of Cambray, who says he was an eye-witness to it.

He says that whilst at school he had contracted a very strict friendship with a fellow-student, a person of quality, and endowed with all the virtues one could wish in a young man. Happy if he had preserved that treasure of innocence! But it happened by a misfortune, too frequent among young persons, that he fell into wicked company, which kindled in his heart the fire of unchaste love. This in a short time banished all his good inclinations, and plunged him into the depth of vice. His irregularities became public, yet he continued this kind of life, notwithstanding the admonitions of his friends; and this author says that he himself frequently exhorted him to return to the way from which he had departed. As he contemned all advice, God willed in his person to show an example to young people who permit themselves to be blindly carried away by this miserable sin, by the following dreadful accident:—Being asleep at midnight, he was seized with a terrible fright, and awakening, he began to cry out in a dreadful manner. The whole house, alarmed at his cries, come at once to his assistance. They ask him the cause of his alarm, but can get no other answer from him than hideous cries. They send for the priest, who comes, and exhorts him to think upon God, and beg pardon of his sins. But all is in vain. The priest, continuing to exhort him with many moving expressions and tears, he at last turns towards him, and looking upon him with ghastly eyes, speaks thus to him in a voice of terror: "Woe be to him that seduced me! woe be to him that seduced me! It is in vain to invoke the grace of God—I see hell open to receive me." After these words, which made all present lament and sigh, every one entreating him to recommend himself to God, he turned to the other side, and sending forth a shout of agony and woe, he dies in despair!

THE IMPENITENT SINNER.

A young nobleman of Spain had been for many years addicted to the vile sin of impurity. At last he was seized with a fatal malady. His friends exhorted him in the strongest terms to make his peace with God, by having recourse to the sacrament of penance; but the very name of confession was insupportable to him. St. Francis Borgia, who was at that time in Spain, having heard of the obduracy

of the young nobleman, fell prostrate before a crucifix, and with tears in his eyes, besought the Saviour not to suffer that soul to perish which had been redeemed by His precious blood. Wonderful to tell! he heard a voice saying to him, "Go, Francis, go find out the impenitent soul, and exhort him to penance." The saint went, and exhorted the dying man to penance; but all his efforts were unavailing. The dying man, though in the very grasp of death, would not listen to him. St. Francis left the room, and again prostrating himself before the crucifix, he conjured Jesus Christ by His passion and blood to soften the heart of the impenitent soul. The same voice is again heard saying, "Return to the dying man, and take with you your crucifix; and if he desires not to be converted at the view of a God who loved him even to death, and to the death of the cross, he must have made up his mind to be damned." Francis went a second time to the dying man's bed, drew forth the crucifix, and held it before his eyes. And, lo! the crucifix appeared covered with wounds and covered with blood! But all these efforts of grace proved unavailing, for confess the dying sinner would not. The saint redoubled his zealous and charitable exertions; he solicited him; he conjured him by the wounds of Jesus Christ and by the blood with which he saw his image covered, to have mercy on his poor soul. But all to no purpose. The dying sinner is more insensible than the rocks which were cleft asunder when Jesus' blood flowed on Calvary. He died at last blaspheming his Creator and Redeemer.—*Life of St. Francis Borgia.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Is impurity a profanation of God's temple?
2. How is impurity an insult to Jesus Christ and an injury to ourselves?
3. How do we sin against our own bodies by impurity?
4. Does impurity destroy the image of God in man?
5. In what way can we judge of the grievousness of a sin?
6. What is the first remarkable punishment of impurity?
7. Can you infer the enormity of impurity from the word "repenteth," made use of by God?
8. Did God punish impurity in any other signal manner?
9. Were Onias and the Israelites punished for impurity?

10. In what way does impurity cause a blindness and insensibility of the mind?

11. How does impurity create an aversion to God and to pious practices?

12. Is pride a consequence of impurity?

13. Is hardness of heart produced by the sin of impurity?

14. Is impurity the source of many other sins?

15. What is the last sad result of impurity?

PRACTICE.

1. Often think of the punishments inflicted on those guilty of impurity, that you may always entertain a hatred of that sin.

2. Recollect that the sin of impurity when indulged, will lead to many other sins.

3. Never forget that sins of the flesh will murder the heart, and render the soul impenitent.

PRAYER.

O dear Lord! how filthy in Thy sight must the sin of impurity be, when Thou punishest it so signally! Cursed incontinence! who is there that can hate thee as thou deservest? We have now seen, O Lord! the woeful consequences of that sin. Many fair souls have been forcibly taken away from Thee by its blithing influence, who otherwise would live in innocence and virtue. We detest it from our hearts, and we are from this day resolved, dear Lord, to suffer everything sooner than commit a sin attended with such disastrous results. Help us, O God! to fulfil the resolutions we have now made. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ON THEFT AND RAPINE.

Q. Say the seventh Commandment.
A. Thou shalt not steal.

1. What we most value in this world is our life, our reputation, and our goods. Almighty God, therefore, thought it not enough to protect our bodies from injuries,

and our lives by an unjust invasion, by the fifth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill;" and the honour and the reputation of our families, by the sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" but He defends, likewise, our property and effects from being taken away from us, by this seventh Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." In these Commandments there is nothing prohibited which is not also prohibited by the law of nature; for it is a clear principle of reason, that *we should not do to others that which we wish should not be done to ourselves.* If we but applied this rule, which the light of nature makes clear to us, to all those actions which regard our neighbour, we might easily judge whether they were good or bad, just or unjust.

Q. What is forbidden by the seventh Commandment?

A. All unjust taking, or keeping what belongs to another.

2. By "the seventh Commandment," God prohibits us from taking *unjustly* the property of another or what belongs to him, that is, from making *our own* what does not belong to us: "Thou shalt not steal," He says in the book of Exodus. All "unjust taking" of another's property is fordidden by the seventh Commandment; for if "what belongs to another" be *justly* taken, there is no violation of the Commandment, and, consequently, no sin. Therefore, to *take away* anything with the free consent of the owner, or when his consent is presumed to be certain, is no sin against "the seventh Commandment." We are forbidden by God not only to *take unjustly* "what belongs to another," but also to *keep* what has been taken, when we know that it belongs to another, and that the person to whom it belongs is *unwilling* that we should keep it. "All unjust taking or keeping what belongs to another," if done against

his will, in a *secret* way, is called *theft;* if done against his will, with *open violence*, is called *rapine* or robbery.

3. We shall, in the first place, speak of *theft*. There are several kinds of *theft*, both public and private. Of public *theft* those are guilty who misapply the public funds, or turn them to their own private uses; who acknowledge not all they have received, or charge the public with what they have not expended. Guardians of the poor, executors of last wills, and all those who have the trust or charge of what belongs to others, are guilty of public *theft*, if they fraudulently retain any of the money that passes through their hands. They are also guilty of public theft, who holding any public office, take bribes, and administer their office unjustly and unfaithfully. It would, dear children, be too tedious to mention the variety of ways and means by which lawyers, executors, trustees, guardians, and all such as are in public offices, commit injustices and render themselves guilty of public *theft*. Those who practise these unwarrantable ways are sensible of the wrong and injustice they perpetrate, and need not be informed that by their proceedings they violate "the seventh Commandment."

4. Of private thefts, or "unjust taking or keeping what belongs to another," there are many kinds. (1) They are guilty of this sort of theft, who steal from the rich to give to the poor, under the pretence of alms. (2) Those are guilty of *private theft*, who steal from the rich and wealthy, under the plea that such rich persons want not what is taken, that they will not miss it, or that they will be made no poorer by the money or value taken. This, says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, is not only a miserable defence, but a wicked pretence. (3) They are guilty of *theft*, who defraud workmen of their hire, and servants of their wages; and, on the other side, as the Catechism of the Council of Trent says: "it is also a downright theft, when labourers and arti-

zans exact full wages from those to whom they have not given just and due labour; nor are unfaithful servants and stewards any other than thieves; nay, they are more detestable than other thieves, against whom everything may be locked, whilst against a pilfering servant nothing in a house can be secured by bolt or lock." (4) Children are guilty of *theft*, who steal money or corn from their parents, to provide themselves with the means of indulging in games and pastimes. (5) Tradesmen and others are guilty of *theft*, who require more materials than are necessary for their work, and afterwards keep what is left—tailors who retain the remnants of cloth, or who charge more than they pay for the cloth which they purchase for others.

5. (6). They are guilty of *theft*, who find things and neglect to return them to the owner, when they know him; or who, when they do not know the owner, neglect to make a diligent search in order to find him. "Goods accidentally found," says St. Liguori, "should be preserved as long as there remains a hope of finding the owner; and I add, that when the thing found is of great value, such as a costly ornament, a valuable ring, a purse containing a large sum of money, there is always reason to hope that the owner will be found, if not immediately, at least, in course of time; for he will take care to publish the loss in every place through which he has passed; and thus, in the course of time, the owner of the article lost will be ascertained." "What thou hast found," says St. Augustin, "and hast not restored, thou hast stolen it."

6. (7.) All those, in fine, are guilty of *theft*, who unjustly take anything from others, or retain what does not belong to them, contrary to the will of the owners; for what is not one's own ought to be restored. And not only are those guilty of *theft* who steal themselves, but also all persons who co-operate in the theft by their command, counsel, or persuasion—by receiv-

ing and securing stolen goods—by taking part of, or sharing in them—by not preventing the theft, when they could easily have prevented it, or by not discovering the thief, that the stolen property may be restored, and the persons injured receive their own, especially where the duty of their employment and charge requires this of them. All such persons, though they steal not themselves, yet, as they are accessary to it, they render themselves guilty of *theft*.

7. Besides *theft*, there is another sort of "unjust taking or keeping what belongs to another," called *rapine*. Rapine is, as we have already said, an unjust taking away or retaining what belongs to another against his will, by open violence. Of this sin of *rapine*, those are guilty who oppress the orphans, the widow, or the poor, and take advantage of their unprotected position and necessities to squeeze money from them. This is the most detestable kind of *rapine* in the sight of God; and in the Scriptures He has denounced woes and calamities against all those guilty of it. Those who attack and rob persons on the highway, or plunder the houses and farm-yards of others, despite every opposition and remonstrance, are also guilty of *rapine;* and so, too, are those who abuse their power and authority to deprive others unjustly of their goods and possessions, as Jezebel did to Naboth, as we read in the book of Kings. Of such persons the Scriptures speak in the severest terms: "The bread of the needy is the life of the poor; he that defraudeth them thereof is a man of blood. He that taketh away thy bread gotten by sweat, is like him that killeth his neighbour." (Ecclus. xxxiv. 25.)

Q. Is stealing a grievous sin?
A, Yes; it is of its own nature a very grievous sin.

8. Stealing is, of *itself*, a mortal sin, for St. Paul expressly declares that it excludes for ever from the

kingdom of heaven: "But you do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren. Know you not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of heaven?" (1 Cor. vi. 8.) Nor should we wonder that God so severely punishes this sin of injustice and cheating our neighbour; for it is not only a violation of the positive law of God, *thou shalt not steal*, but it is also a violation of the law of nature. The natural law forbids us to do to others what we would not have others do to us; but is there anything that we condemn so much as that of being wronged of our property by either force or fraud? Stealing is also a violation of justice and charity. It is a breach of justice, for justice obliges us to wrong no man, but to render to every man what is his own. It is a violation of charity; for stealing from our neighbour is a cause of great distress of mind and body to him, and occasions but too often anger, contentions, quarrels, law-suits, and fighting.

9. So, there is no doubt of stealing *in itself* being a mortal sin; but the question is, what quantity is it that amounts to mortal sin. To determine this, we must take into account not only the thing itself which is stolen, but also the circumstances of the person to whom the property belongs, and also the circumstances of time and place. Every grievous theft is a mortal sin, even though the whole amount should be taken away on several occasions; for many small sums make up a large amount. If the theft be committed not secretly but by force, it is a double sin, because it is a double injustice. If the thing stolen belong to the church, or if the theft be committed in the church, it is a sacrilege.

Q. What else is forbidden by the seventh Commandment?

A. All cheating in buying or selling, or any other injury done to our neighbour in his property. (1 Cor. v. 10.)

10. Besides the different sorts of theft of which we have already spoken, the seventh Commandment forbids "all cheating in buying or selling." To cheat "in buying or selling," either by false weights and measures, or in putting off bad goods as sound, is highly criminal, and severely condemned by the word of God. "A deceitful balance," says the wise man, "is an abomination before the Lord, and a just weight is His will." (Prov. xi. 1.) And again, in the same book, he repeats the abomination in which God holds "cheating in buying or selling:" "Diverse weights and diverse measures, both are abominable before God." (Prov. xx. 10.) This desire of "cheating in buying or selling" — selling above the value, and buying under the value—is common to a great many, who, as St. Thomas of Aquin says, are walking in the broad way of sin and perdition. Such may imagine that they are at liberty to buy goods as cheap as they can; but this is a very great mistake, for justice requires an equality between the price of the goods that are bought or sold; and for this reason the virtue of justice is usually represented by a pair of scales, which equalises things that are exchanged one for another.

11. Of this sin of "cheating" all those are guilty who *sell* above a just price, or *buy* beneath the real value —sellers who conceal the faults of bad goods, and represent them as sound—buyers who depreciate the goods they purchase from ignorant persons, and on that account buy them under value—sellers who use oaths or lies to get more than their goods are worth, and thus impose upon simple and guileless buyers. Of this sin of "cheating in buying and selling," retailers of spirituous liquors are also guilty, who mix water with spirits, and then demand the price of pure spirits, or who make others pay for more spirits and beer than they get. Persons who mix slates or stones with coals, or who deceive the purchasers in weighing these coals, are

guilty of this sin of "cheating;" and those also are guilty of this sin, who sell goods for others and keep a part of the price received; for as the entire price received belongs to the owners of the goods, the sellers can retain only the wages of their labour. All such persons, and all others connected with trade, sin against the seventh Commandment by "cheating in buying or selling."

12. "Any other injury done to our neighbour in his property" is, too, "forbidden by the seventh Commandment." If we slay or maim our neighbour's cattle—if we cut down his timber—if we injure his corn or fruit—if we allow our horses and cattle to feed on his ground—if we pull down his hedges and fences—if, in a word, we injure anything belonging to him, we violate "the seventh Commandment."

Q. Is there any other particular vice by which we injure our neighbour in his property?

A. Yes; we injure our neighbour in his property by usury.

13. By the word *usury* is meant any reward or profit which we take for the loan of money, or of any other goods for consumption, solely on account of the thing lent. The reward received from this source is called *interest*. Thus, the *interest* on a loan is what we receive over and above the money lent. Where grounds *extrinsical* to the loan actually exist, a *moderate interest* is allowable, or such interest as is allowed by the state. To take more than a *moderate* interest, or more than is determined by the state, for what we lend, whether in goods or work, is *usury*. Those, then, are guilty of *usury*, and of the very worst description of usury, who take exorbitant interest from the poor, for money lent them in their distress. Those, also, are guilty of this crying sin who lend meal, corn, potatoes, or any other goods which are consumed in the using of them, and

demand an exorbitant and illegal profit for the use of them.

14. *Usury* is, of its own nature, a mortal sin, whether practised on the rich or poor. The Holy Scriptures, in a great many places, condemns *usury* in the most formal manner: "Thou shalt not lend to thy brother," says God, in the book of Deuteronomy, "money to usury, nor corn, nor any other thing." (Deut. xxiii. 19.) The prophet Ezechiel thus speaks of usurers, murderers, and robbers: "He that is a robber, a shedder of blood . . . . that giveth upon usury, and taketh increase; shall such a one live? He shall not live . . . . he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him." (Ezech. xviii. 11.) In the gospel of St. Luke, our Saviour tells us to lend, but without hoping anything for the loan: "Lend, hoping for nothing thereby." (Luke, vi. 35.) That is, we must hope for nothing, merely as a reward for the use of our money lent. When we lend money out, we surely are allowed to take some *interest*, but that *interest* is not to be considered *solely* as the reward or recompense for the loan, but as a just compensation for the loss one sustains by not having the money in his own hands, or the danger to which it is exposed while it remains in the borrower's hands.

15. The Fathers of the Church have ever raised their voices against *usury*, and openly declared that everything we receive over and above what we lend, *solely on account of the loan*, is an injustice. "Usury," says St. Basil, "is the cursed daughter of covetousness, and of attachment to the goods of this world." All the Councils have equally condemned *usury*. The second General Council of Lyons, held under Gregory X., excommunicated *usurers;* and the General Council of Vienna, under Clement V., gravely censured all those who should support that usury was lawful. The Sovereign Pontiffs, up to even Pope Pius IX., have invariably maintained the doctrine that *usury* could not be allowed. Usury is,

then, condemned by the sacred Scriptures, by the traditions of the holy Fathers of the Church, by the Popes, and by Councils. Therefore, *usurers* who receive, without any legitimate title, *interest* for the money lent by them, receive that which belongs not to them—they appropriate the goods of others, which, if they restore not, they can *never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE PUNISHMENT OF INJUSTICE.

Under the reign of the Greek emperor, Justinian, fraud and every description of injustice had arrived at such a height, that the emperor deemed it necessary one day to complain of it before his senators. When he had spoken, one of those present advanced near him, and said that in a short time he would put an end to such unjust practices, if his majesty would only invest him with the powers necessary to accomplish that desirable object. The emperor granted him what he required. Not long after this arrangement had taken place, a poor old widow came to the appointed minister of justice with a complaint that she had been aggrieved by one who enjoyed great influence at court; that, after the death of her husband, a great part of her property had been taken away from her by him. The minister immediately wrote to the oppressor of this widow, commanding him to restore what he had unjustly deprived her of; but his letter was unattended to. He was then cited to appear and answer the charge brought against him. A searching inquiry was entered into; witnesses were heard, and the charges carefully considered. The culprit being convicted of the accusation brought against him, was stripped and scourged with rods. Then his head was shaved, and he was placed on an ass, with his face towards the tail, and in this way was led through the city. A public crier walked on before him, proclaiming aloud the crime of the convicted one, his name, his rank, and also the punishment inflicted on him. This example of severity, unheard-of up to that time, had the intended effect. Unjust proceedings soon ceased, and order at once took the place of misrule.—*Stalb. R. G.*

THE POOR BUT HONEST MAN.

A poor man one day found a purse containing about two hundred pieces of gold and silver. He knew that he could not make his own of what he found, and so he posted up a notice, in which was written: Whoever has lost some pieces of gold and silver, can recover them by applying to —— who lives in ——. The person who lost the money made every inquiry about it, but the money could not be found. At last the notice attracted his attention, and he at once hastened to the spot where he who had found the money lived. He saw the poor man, and after having answered satisfactorily the few questions proposed to him in reference to the money, the purse was handed to him. So grateful was the owner to the poor man, that he offered him a tenth part of the money found. It would not be taken. "Take at least three pieces," said he. "No," replied the poor man, "I will have none." "I beg of you, then," said the other, "to accept five pieces." The poor man persisted in his refusal to take any of the money. Being again and again solicited to take a little, he at last consented, but no sooner had he received it, than he divided it with others equally poor as himself.

THE LAST WILL OF AN USURER.

A certain man, remarkable during life for avarice, and infamous for his many usurious practices, seeing that his last hour was at hand, called for a scrivener in order to make his will. As soon as the scrivener arrived, the dying man dictated his will in the following terms: "I give my body to the earth, from which it has been formed, and I bequeath my soul to the devil, to whom it belongs." The friends who surrounded his bed were terrified at such frightful expressions. They entreated the dying man to lay aside these frightful thoughts, and to recollect that he was soon to appear before his God. But all attempts to change his mind proved unavailing. Persisting in his blasphemy and despair, he repeated the same words again and again, in a louder voice and with greater emphasis. "Yes," said he, "I leave my soul to the devils, that devils may carry it into hell, in punishment of my taking what belonged to others by usury. I also leave to the devils the soul of my wife, and the souls of my children, because it was on their account that I had engaged in those vile and crying practices of usury." He had scarcely uttered these terrible words when his soul quitted his body in frightful agony and despair.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Are murder, adultery, and stealing forbidden by the law of nature?
2. Do we violate the seventh Commandment by merely taking and keeping the property of our neighbour?
3. Enumerate the different sorts of public theft.
4. Mention some of the ways in which private thefts are committed.
5. Are those guilty of theft who retain what they find?
6. In what other way can theft be committed?
7. What do you understand by that species of stealing called rapine?
8. Why is it that stealing is a grievous sin?
9. What must the amount stolen be to constitute a mortal sin?
10. Is cheating in buying and selling an abomination in the sight of God?
11. Mention those in particular who are guilty of cheating in buying and selling.
12. In what other way can our neighbour be injured in his property?
13. What do you understand by usury and usurers?
14. Can you prove from Scripture that usury is a grievous sin?
15. Is usury condemned by the Councils and the holy Fathers?

PRACTICE.

1. Never allow yourself to be induced to take unjustly from another that which belongs to him.
2. Be ever upright in your dealings, and defraud not any person, even of the smallest amount.
3. Always recollect that the unjust shall never enter the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER.

Thou shalt not steal. O my God! how many obligations are comprised in these few words. They have just now been explained to us, and for this important instruction we give Thee thanks. We

have been taught that we should never defraud our neighbour, nor injure his property in any way. We acknowledge, O Lord, that we have but too often transgressed Thy command of not stealing, but we now resolve never again to be guilty of theft or fraud, or of any other unjust act. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ON RESTITUTION.

Q. What is commanded by the seventh Commandment?

A. To pay our lawful debts, and to give every one his own.

1. We are commanded, dear children, "by the seventh Commandment," to pay whatever we owe. A debt means anything that is due by us to others. If we have, at any time, borrowed money, or purchased goods, we are bound by the "seventh Commandment" to return the money borrowed, and to pay for the goods purchased, and that at the time fixed on between the lender or seller and ourselves. It would be a violation of every law of probity and justice not "to pay our lawful debts" when it is in our power to do so; for to refuse to pay what we owe is to wrong another of what is justly due to him. To delay paying debts when due, and when the creditor needs them, is unjustly to retain what belongs to another, is the cause of the owner being put to great loss and inconvenience for want of his own, and is frequently the source of the ruin of merchants and traders. But if, after having contracted debts, we find it impossible to pay

them, what should we do? All unnecessary expenses should be avoided—we should live in the most economical way, and labour unceasingly to improve our means, so that we may be enabled to discharge those debts which we had contracted. "Render, therefore," says St. Paul, "to all men their dues." (Rom. xiii. 7.)

2. "And to give every one his own" we are strictly obliged by the "seventh Commandment." Whoever, therefore, has unjustly in his possession the goods which he knows belongs to another, he is bound by every law, divine and human, to restore them. If stolen goods be in his possession, they must be given to the person from whom they had been stolen, even though he had purchased the articles, for every one should receive "his own." It is useless to say, "If I had not purchased them, another would have bought them." Do not allow yourself to be thus deceived by the devil. You have paid money for them; but do you not know that it is stolen property? How then can you keep it? You have done wrong in buying these articles; you must now restore them, for every one must get "his own." If we have found anything belonging to another, we must restore it to the person to whom it belongs. If the person who lost the money or goods be not known to us, we should make the necessary inquiries about him, and retain the property for some time, until it is claimed by the owner, for we must "give every one his own."

3. It is, dear children, a great delusion to think that whatever we find we can retain. The property lost by another is still his property, for he is unwilling to resign all claim to it; and if it be found it must be restored, for we must "give every one his own." "Justice," says St. Augustin, "obliges us so strictly to return the property of another when found, that if we restore it not, we are as guilty as if we had stolen it. What you have found, and not restored, you have stolen." If the owner cannot

be found, or if he have no heir, the value must be given to the poor, or for some charitable object.

Q. What are they obliged to do who retain ill-got goods, or who have unjustly what belongs to another?

A. To restore them as soon as possible, and as far as they are able, otherwise the sin will not be forgiven them.

4. When "ill-got goods" are in our possession, we are strictly obliged to restore them to the owner. This is the positive law of God, and also a law written in our hearts. The law of nature, by the very fact of its prohibiting us from taking "unjustly what belongs to another," commands us to restore what belongs not to us to the rightful owner. Whenever, therefore, stolen or "ill-got goods" are in our possession, or whenever we "have unjustly what belongs to another," whether by stealing them ourselves, or by receiving them from those who stole them—we cannot retain them or make away with them but must restore them to the person to whom they belong.

5. And "as soon as possible," these "ill-got goods," or whatever we hold *unjustly* in our possession "belonging to another," must be restored. We are obliged to restore them *immediately*, if we can; but if it be not in our power to make restitution immediately, we should do so "as soon as possible." When a person is able to make restitution, and defers it for a notable time, he is guilty of mortal sin, if the amount to be restored be considerable. And should the owner or creditor suffer any loss on account of the delay, he is bound to repair the loss; for it is certain that a thief is obliged to compensate the owner for all the damage done him by the theft.

6. "And as far as they are able," persons should restore

"ill-got goods," or whatever they "have unjustly belonging to another." They are bound to restore all and every article of stolen property that may remain in their hands, if they are able, for God requires that *everything* stolen should be restored. But if one cannot restore all, he should restore a part, and have the intention of giving the remainder when in his power. And to put into execution that intention, he should curtail the expenses of his family, make some sacrifices of comfort and ease, suffer inconveniences, and submit to privations from time to time.

7. But here is the rock on which a great many Christians split. "If I am now obliged to make restitution," one will say, "I will be reduced to beggary! What will become of my family? what will my children do?" The answer to this is, that it is better to die poor than to die with the property of another—that it is far better to enter heaven poor, than to fall into hell rich. For is there anything in this world that can compensate us for the loss of heaven? Is there anything here below that can be a recompense for the eternal pains of hell? Is it not better, then, to return every one his own, and to live poor and honest, and to gain heaven, than for a little worldly enjoyment for ourselves or our posterity, to be at our death buried in hell?

8. We read in the fourth book of Kings, that one day a certain woman came to Eliseus the Prophet, and told him that her husband was dead, and that a creditor came to demand what was due to him. Eliseus asked her what she had in her house, and she answered, saying: "I have nothing in my house but a little oil to anoint me." Eliseus told her to borrow a good number of empty vessels from her neighbours, and to pour the oil into them. And the woman did so, and all the vessels became full. She then went and told the man of God what had taken place, "And he said, go sell the oil and pay thy creditor."

9. To all those who have "ill-got goods," or "who have unjustly what belongs to another," the same words are to be addressed, if they urge the pretext of not having anything more than is necessary for the support of their family: "Go and sell, and pay your creditors." It is worthy of remark, that Eliseus considers that the claims of the creditor should be satisfied before those of the family of the widow: "Go sell the oil, and pay thy creditor, and thou and thy sons live of the rest." Is this the method followed now-a-days by those who are obliged to restitution? No; their table must be well served first; they must be richly clothed; their houses must be richly furnished; and what remains after this may go, perhaps, to pay their debts.

10. To restore "ill-got goods," or what we "have unjustly belonging to another," is a necessary condition to obtain pardon, not only for the sin of *injustice*, but of any sin of which we have been guilty. The law of God strictly requires this restitution, "otherwise the sin will not be forgiven." In the book of Ezechiel we read: "And if that wicked man restore the pledge, and render what he had robbed, and walk in the commandments of life, and do no unjust thing, he shall surely live, and shall not die." (Ezech. xxxiii. 15.) Here life is promised to such as are guilty of the sins of injustice, but it is upon condition that they not only do penance for them, but likewise do justice, by returning what they have wrongfully in their possession, or what they unjustly detain from others. On these, and only on these terms, the Prophet assures them of the pardon of their sins. And this, dear children, stands with reason; for if a real repentance is necessary for the pardon of our sins—as certainly it is—satisfaction is, without doubt, necessary. But how can there be a real will to repent of the evil we have done, where there is not a real will to satisfy for it as far as we are able? How can any one be sorrowful for

the injustice he has committed, whilst he still designs to continue the injustice? How can he have a regret in his heart for having injured another in his property, when he has no mind to repair the injury?

11. In order to obtain forgiveness of sin, says St. Thomas, we must strictly observe the laws of equity; and therefore, adds the saint, to obtain pardon of sin, we must restore, if we possibly can, that which we have unjustly taken; for without this restitution there can be no real conversion, nor any hope of obtaining pardon from God. Yes, dear children, we may strike our breasts and call on the Lord for forgiveness—we may groan with sorrow at the feet of God's minister—we may confess with tears in our eyes; still all this will be of no avail, if we retain unjustly the property of our neighbour. If we restore not "ill-got goods," our sighs and tears and prayers will be a mere mockery: there is no real sorrow for sin, but a hypocritical, fruitless sorrow.

12. For this reason it has been always the constant practice of the Church to refuse absolution and the holy sacraments to thieves, robbers, usurers, extortioners, unjust dealers, receivers, accomplices, and usurpers of other men's goods, unless they both renounce their wicked practices, and make *restitution* for their past injustices. Unless this be done by them, they cannot be supposed to be true gospel penitents, or to have a real regret for their past sins. Their conversion is but a mere phantom; for, as St. Augustin says, in his letter to Macedonius, where there is injustice, no forgiveness can be had from God. "They are the worst sort of men," says the saint, "whom you mentioned to me—they reap no benefit from the healing sacrament of penance; for where injustice is the sin, if what is taken away be not restored in itself, or its equivalent, there is only a pretence of, and not a real repentance; for there is no forgiveness to be had where restitution is not made." (Epist. 153.)

13. You see then, dear children, from what has been said, how very necessary it is to make restitution, or restore "ill-got goods," or whatever we "have unjustly belonging to another," as also to repair whatever loss one has sustained at our hands. Without this restitution we can never hope to enter the kingdom of heaven, or to escape the flames of hell. Forgiveness is not to be had where restitution is not made in reality, if possible; and if that be impossible, then in desire, and that without delay—*Render to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar.*

14. If you neglect to restore on to-day what is not your own, you may not have an opportunity of doing it on to-morrow. What! shall you make up your mind to damn yourselves for the sake of a little money, which you shall one day leave behind you? Will you condemn your souls to eternal torments by putting off restitution, through a mistaken regard for your children, friends, or relations, who, perhaps, in a few short years, will waste and scatter about all the property that you laboured so much to gather together? And would you, dear children, be pleased that your parents should condemn themselves to eternal torments, in order to enrich you? You would not. Then entreat your parents to repair at once all the injustices they have committed. Let the salutary advice of St. Augustin be ever practised by all: *Redde pecuniam, perde pecuniam, ne perdas animam.* Restore the money which does not belong to you, and if it be necessary, even lose that money which does not belong to you, that you may not lose your soul which belongs to God, and which was redeemed by Jesus Christ.

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

HONESTY OF A CHINESE CHRISTIAN.

A poor Chinese Christian found in one of the streets of Pekin a purse containing twenty pieces of gold. He looked around, hoping to find a claimant; and thinking it might have fallen from a gentleman on horseback, who had just passed, he ran after him, and asked if he had lost anything. The gentleman searched his pockets, and missing his purse, replied in a tremulous voice: "Yes, I have lost my purse, containing twenty pieces of gold!" "Be not disturbed," said the poor man, "here it is with the twenty pieces." The gentleman, recovering from his alarm, could not but admire so noble an action, in a man of humble condition. "But who are you?" said he; "what is your name?—where do you live?" "It matters little," said the poor man, "for you to know who I am: it is sufficient to tell you that I am a Christian—one of those who make profession of observing the law of the Gospel, which forbids, not only to steal the goods of others, but even to keep what may be found by chance, when the owner can be discovered." The gentleman was so struck with the purity of Christian morality, that he went immediately to the church of the Christians, in order to receive instructions in the mysteries of our religion.—*Letteres Edifiantes.*

THE DEATH OF AN UNJUST FATHER.

One who had been for many years guilty of unjust practices, being at last at the point of death, sent for a confessor to administer to him the last sacrament. The confessor told him that the first step to be taken was the restitution of property, as his goods had been unjustly acquired. "But what shall become of my children?" said the dying man. "The salvation of your soul ought to be much dearer to you," said the confessor, "than the fortune of your family." "I cannot resolve on doing what you require; I cannot do it," replied the unfortunate man, and in a few moments after he expired. How awful a death! How much it should cause those to tremble who have acquired the goods which they possess by fraud and injustice.—*Catechime de L'Empire.*

A SICK FATHER INDUCED TO MAKE RESTITUTION.

A certain father of a family who was very rich, but whose riches were obtained unjustly, had contracted a dangerous malady. He

was well aware that his malady would prove fatal, yet he could not be induced to restore his ill-got property. Whenever he was spoken to on the subject, he immediately answered: "What should become of my three sons? They would be wretched for ever." A priest who had heard of this circumstance determined to bring the dying man to a sense of his duty, and for this purpose had recourse to the following ingenious artifice. "If," said he to the sick man, "you wish to recover from your malady, you must procure a little of the fat of human flesh, extracted by fire, and have it applied to your body. It will be no easy matter to procure it, but perhaps a large sum of money may induce some person to put his hand for some minutes in a fire to have a little fat extracted from it." The sick man replied that it would be impossible to procure, even for the largest sum of money, what was deemed necessary for his cure. "Have you not children?" said the priest; "send to them, and make known your desire of obtaining the remedy." The sick man had three sons, the matter was proposed to each of them in turn: but none of them would submit to the pain of fire for the recovery of their father. The priest then said to the sick man: "Is it not the greatest folly on your part to ruin both your soul and body, and cast them into hell to burn for ever, through regard for your children, who, to save your life, would not consent to endure for a quarter of an hour the pain of an earthly fire?" This circumstance touched the sick man. "I have done wrong," said he, "but my eyes are now opened to my injustices" He then restored all that he owed, and compensated for all the losses others suffered through his means.—*Peter de Palude.*

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Are we bound, in strict justice, to pay our debts?
2. Are we obliged to restore whatever we have belonging to another?
3. Can we convert to our own purposes anything we find?
4. Are we obliged to restore every thing ill-got to the owner?
5. Should we restore immediately stolen property?
6. Are we obliged to restore every article of ill-got goods?
7. What are the motives which should induce us to restore what belongs to another?
8. What says the prophet Eliseus on restitution?
9. Are the words of Eliseus applicable to creditors now-a-days?
10. Can we be saved without making restitution?

11. Is restitution a necessary condition of obtaining absolution from sin?

12. What has been the practice of the Church with regard to those who make not restitution?

13. If we cannot actually make restitution, must we have the desire of making it?

14. Is it the height of folly to neglect making restitution?

PRACTICE.

1. Remember that we must not only repent of having taken anything from our neighbour, but we must also restore what we have taken.

2. Never forget that we cannot be saved without making reparation for the injury we have caused.

3. If you cannot make restitution immediately, resolve to do so as soon as possible.

PRAYER.

O God! we have now been taught the great injury we bring on our souls by not restoring what we have unjustly taken from another. We have learned that, in order to save our souls, we must make restitution for all the losses we have caused to others. We acknowledge before thee, O Lord! that we have, on many occasions, taken the property of others; but we now resolve to make reparation for the losses sustained by them at our hands. We repent of all our many thefts, and shall at once restore what we have taken. Fill our hearts, O Lord! with the spirit of justice, that we may ever do to others what we wish should be done to ourselves. Amen.

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